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LATER GREEK RELIGION

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LATER GREEK RELIGION

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PREFACE

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INTRODUCTION

In a preceding volume of this series Mr. Cornford illustrated Greek religious thought in the great days of Greek freedom which ended with the Macedonian conquest in the fourth century B.C. In the present volume it will be our task to survey Greek religious thought in the centuries which followed. Greek culture had still a great work to do in the world. If the Macedonian conquest lowered the interest of politics in the old Greek city-states, it made Greek culture dominant over a far larger area, and when, in process of time, all the countries round the Mediterranean came to form a single state under the Roman emperors, it was the literature and art of the Greeks, the Greek philosophic tradition, which everywhere shaped education and gave men their system of intellectual concepts and their standards of value. And although no more great original philosophers equal to Plato and Aristotle arose in the sphere of Hellenism, Greek thought, when confronted with new situations and new problems, by no means ceased to be creative. Systems such as Stoicism and Neoplatonism made original contributions of worth to the religious thought of men. In the end, a religion which arose outside the Hellenic tradition, amongst the Hebrews of Palestine, conquered the Roman Empire and abolished the worship of the Greek gods. But even so, Greek religious thought did not cease to have power over men's minds. A great mass of Platonism, of Aristotelianism, of Stoicism was taken over by Christianity and became part of the Christian

tradition. The official philosophy of the Roman communion at the present day is largely, and quite confessedly, drawn from Aristotle.

It was on its religious side that the culture of the Greeks had been weakest. The rationalism developed amongst the Greeks in the sixth century B.C. made Greek thought a new thing in the world. It was the beginning of that movement which has led to all the achievements of modern science. The aesthetic feeling of the Greeks, developing in close contact with their rationalism, enabled them to produce works of art which have never been surpassed and a literature which is still to-day called "classical." But the religious tradition of the Greek city-states remained, for the most part, at the primitive level. Old crude stories, akin to those told by savages, continued to form the mythology passed on from generation to generation as the truth about the gods. No doubt the old stories were early worked over by Greek aesthetic feeling, so that, as stories, they became charming and presented the mind with a succession of beautiful images; they became the material of admirable poetry, but, if taken seriously as an account of the Divine, they could hardly be put higher than the mythology of South Sea Islanders. Many actions attributed to the gods were flagrantly immoral according to the standards of conduct which the citizens of the Greek city-states had come to recognise for human life. Yet it would be a mistake to regard the old Greek religion as having no force for morals. In the matter of sexual relations it had indeed very little, or perhaps even told on the wrong side. But in two important respects it did safeguard right conduct between man and man. One of these was in regard to the oath: whatever conception of the gods

the Greek townsman may have had, he held that they punished perjury. The other was the protection which the gods were believed to give to suppliants: to wrong the weak who appealed in the name of the gods was thought to be dangerous. And these two things, after all, are the two main pillars upon which human society is built up —the trust of one man in the word of another and the consideration of the strong for the weak.

Mr. Cornford's volume has shown how the Greek mind, as it matured, revolted against the immoral element in the traditional mythology. Sometimes, as in the case of Heraclitus and Xenophanes, a voice was raised which denounced it wholesale as a mass of abominable lies. Sometimes, as in the case of Pindar, there was only the demand that it should be bowdlerised. The gods must at any rate behave like the great Greek gentlemen for whom Pindar sang. Pindar thinks it an unseemly thing that an act of cannibalism should be attributed to the gods—that was the sort of lies that men tell—and in the same breath he attributes to a god an act of sodomy. This was not inconsistent from his point of view: in that aristocratic society cannibalism was a horror, but no stigma was attached to sodomy. Yet such protest as there was remained individual. In the case of the Hebrews institutional religion came to be reshaped according to the ideas of the prophets; the conceptions of the Divine righteousness attained by certain men were embodied in a Law established for the whole community. Nothing of the kind happened amongst the Greeks. Philosophers might discard the popular mythology and give an account of the world which simply left it all aside; they might, like Plato, conceive an ideal state in which the young should be taught nothing about the gods incompatible

with the highest human standards; but in the actual Greek city-states the old rituals went on unchanged and the old mythological stories continued to be told and to be represented all around in painting and sculpture, whilst philosophers in their schools might be teaching quite different notions of the Divine.

In the Greek world, as it was when Alexander set out to conquer Asia, the life of each man derived its interest largely from the life of the city of which he was a citizen. The people of old-fashioned piety and morality followed in their ideas and their actions the traditional code of the community, and, no doubt, even if the traditional religion had poor spiritual worth, it was part of an established social order, which included the norms of justice, temperance and courage, so that one part of the system could hardly be broken up without the other part being badly shaken. This was seen in the Sophistic movement: the same kind of clever people who said that Zeus was out of date and Vortex become king of the world in his place were apt to make the worse appear the better reason in conduct. Already when Plato was teaching in the Academy, individual minds were becoming detached from the general life of their cities and seeking both better conceptions of the Divine and better guides for conduct than the tradition of the fathers could supply. But after the Macedonian conquest this seems to have happened on a much larger scale. The new Greek cities which arose all over the Nearer East attracted multitudes far away from their old environment. The horizons had been enormously extended, the possibilities for the individual of adventure, of gaining wealth and power at the courts of Hellenistic kings, incalculably increased, and the interests of the old city-states seemed parochial

in comparison. Chance, *Tyche*, appeared to rule the world. There was a larger popular demand for philosophy to tell men what kind of universe it really was by which they were surrounded, and what it was good for them to do.

Stoicism was the philosophy which at first best met this need. A popular philosophy must be dogmatic, embodied in distinct formulas, broadly and decisively drawn. Stoicism was all this. Its founder, Zeno, the Hellenised Phoenician from Cyprus, taught in the Painted Porch at Athens in the days when Alexander's great Macedonian marshals were fighting over his inheritance, and in the third century B.C. Zeno's successors at Athens, Cleanthes of Assos and Chrysippus of Soli (in Cilicia), elaborated the system. As the writings of all three have perished, save for a number of scattered fragments quoted by later authors, it is not possible to say precisely how much of the Stoicism which we find in Epictetus, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius was already there in the works of the first Stoic teachers, how much represents a new spirit come into Stoicism after Posidonius. There must at any rate have been in Stoicism from the first a strong religious element. Its basis was a kind of Pantheism. Everything that existed, Zeno taught, was God, and God was material. But the materialism of the Stoics was something quite different from what we mean by materialism to-day. For while God was material body, He was also, according to Zeno, absolute Reason. Modern materialism means that the world is governed by mechanical laws without any directing Mind or Plan; the essential thing for the Stoics was that the world is governed by the providence of a conscious intelligent God. Metaphysical thought was at that date still crude enough with the mass of men

for the Stoics to hold that a material substance like fire could have the qualities of mind, that consciousness and thought, which we know only as something connected with individual centres, could be diffused through material space like a gas. God, Reason, in His proper being was a kind of fiery vapour, sometimes called fire, sometimes called aether, and the world was perpetually passing backwards and forwards between two alternative states. One was the state in which the Divine Fire existed alone, Pure Reason, with no object outside itself, One without any plurality. Then at a particular moment some part of the Divine Fire became condensed and coarsened, and lost its divinity. It turned into air and water and earth (for the four elements of Empedocles had now established themselves for good in all Greek thought about nature). There was now a duality: there was this depotentiated part of God which had turned into passive matter, and there was that part which remained fiery aether, active Reason, God in His proper being. The active Reason set to work upon the passive matter and fashioned out of the four elements a world of manifold objects, such as the one we live in. The kosmos was a sphere, the earth in the centre, partially covered by water, round the earth the air, and round the air the outside envelope of the sphere, the fiery aether which remained God. But God was not only on the outer circumference of the world: He interpenetrated the whole matter of the world as a *pneuma*. This is the same word which was used by the Jews, and afterwards by the Christians, for "spirit"—as a translation of the Hebrew *ruakh*. But it would be misleading to translate it "spirit" in the case of the Stoic kosmology. For with Jews and Christians "spirit" was

something not material: the word *ruakh*, it is true, in its original sense meant the same thing as *pneuma*, air in motion, and was still in Hebrew the ordinary word for "wind," but it came also to be used for the will and consciousness of men and God, and in that sense to mean something not material, "spirit," whereas the Greeks had never used *pneuma*, except in certain poetical metaphors, for the things of the mind. When the Stoics said that the material world was interpenetrated by a Divine *pneuma*, they meant literally by that a kind of fiery gas of one substance with the fiery aether surrounding the world. This fiery gas Stoicism indeed endowed with mental qualities, but it remained material at the same time and so was hardly what we mean by "spirit." By means of this pervading *pneuma* the whole process of the world, the movement of each individual thing, was governed by Divine providence according to the predestined plan. The order of nature by which animals and plants reproduced their kind according to fixed types was due to this *pneuma* working in each kind as the specific *spermatikos logos* of that kind—we may translate "seminal formula." The *logos* of a thing is its "formula" or "type"—the principle which organises it as a rational whole—but since *logos* also means "reason" generally, the term *spermatikos logos* carried the implication that the reproduction of kinds through the seed according to a variety of fixed types was due to the immanent operation of an intelligent Power. (It is sometimes said that the Stoic *spermatikos logos* was parallel to the kosmic Logos of Philo or the Fourth Gospel, but in the fragments of the old Stoic books the word is habitually used in the plural, *spermatikoi logoi*, for the multitude of specific types reproduced by propagation. Stoicism knew

of no kosmic Logos distinct from God or the Divine Fire: where they speak of the *logos* of the world in the singular they generally mean the "scheme" of the world.) Thus everything that happened in the world was part of a Divine plan which the immanent God was working out—a sequence absolutely determined by Reason, which might be called Providence or might be called Destiny. When the world had gone on for a certain period, according to the Plan, it was all burnt up again, reabsorbed into the Divine Fire, and once more God was alone in His single unity. Then after a time the same thing happened over again: another world came into being out of the Divine Fire, ran its predestined course, and was reabsorbed. And so on for ever and ever. The production of a world (*kosmos*) out of the Fire the Stoics called a *diakosmēsis*; the conflagration of a world they called an *ekpyrōsis* (conversion into *pyr*, "fire"). Some of the Stoic teachers said that the same sequence of things was repeated in each world-period down to the smallest details —to all eternity Socrates would be reborn at the predestined moment and endure Xanthippe. But it is not clear that the original teachers went beyond a general similarity between one world-period and another.

With such a view of the Universe, man was brought at every point into contact with God: the Divine Reason encompassed him in all his ways. But the relation was a still closer one; for the reason within the man himself was a particle of the Divine Fire. If he lived in accordance with his reason he lived in accordance with the Power by which the whole world was moved and governed, in accordance, as the Stoics said, "with Nature." The attitude and temper which resulted was essentially religious. In regard to everything that happened outside

the sphere of the man's own will, it meant glad acceptance of everything, however painful. Within the sphere of the man's will it meant the direction of his will to the things marked out by reason as the seemly things for a man to do, with no care for the issue so long as his will was rightly directed.

The Stoic God, if the theory was taken strictly, was hardly personal. Yet it is impossible to think of Reason apart from personality, and so in effect the Stoic often felt towards the encompassing Power as towards a Person, other than himself, a Father whom he could obey and trust, to whom he could render gratitude and praise. The theoretical Pantheism became, in feeling, a Theism. One sees this most strongly in such passages from Epictetus as those given in the present volume. How much religious feeling of this kind we should find in the writings of the early Stoics, if we had them entire, it is impossible to say. Yet it is plain in the fragments of Cleanthes. The great hymn to Zeus is in feeling quite theistic. The attitude towards sinners, the prayer for their conversion, is difficult to square with Stoic theory.

The Stoics, while their view of the world differed so much from that of the ordinary Greek polytheist, did not carry on any war against the popular religion. They had not Plato's reforming zeal, and lent rather their support to the religious tradition. They themselves believed in a multiplicity of gods, for though the supreme God, the Divine Fire, for whom the Stoics habitually used the traditional name Zeus, was One, there was no reason, on their theory, why there should not be many other reasonable beings in the universe besides men. They agreed with the Platonists in thinking that such beings, greater than man, "daemons," existed invisible

in the air and in the aether. They believed too that these beings communicated with men in divination and in dreams, and were thus ready to corroborate the popular belief in such things. The heavenly bodies were animate, and might thus be spoken of as visible gods. They did not, of course, accept the popular mythology in its literal sense. But they could resort to the method to which others before them had resorted—the method of allegory. Even the obscenities in mythological stories or pictured representations they could gravely explain as figures of the truth which was taught plainly in Stoicism. On the question whether the individual human soul continued to exist after death, the Stoics were not unanimous. Some denied that any soul survived death; others held that some souls survived in the air till the next Conflagration. When a Conflagration took place, not only all human souls, but all gods and daemons, were reabsorbed into the Divine Fire: Zeus alone, the Divine Fire itself, was imperishable.

At the same time that Zeno was teaching in the Painted Porch at Athens, the founder of the rival school, Epicurus, himself an Athenian, was teaching in the Garden. In the matter of religion, the general purport of Epicureanism was not to fulfil, but to destroy. Epicurus was convinced that one of the main things which made human life unhappy was fear of the supernatural—fear of the power of gods shown in the phenomena of nature, and fear of what came after death. One would not have supposed that the Greeks of those days were commonly haunted by the fear of hell, but one must remember that the life of the ordinary man in antiquity is badly known to us and that the propaganda of Orphic sects had perhaps gone farther than we could tell from the writings left

by men who regarded such things as beneath them. This fear Epicurus held it his mission to abolish, and he proved that it was quite groundless, because no part of the processes of nature, in us or around us, was due to the operation of supernatural beings: everything came about from the chance collisions of atom-streams; and the soul, itself merely a conglomeration of atoms, was dissipated at death "like smoke." The immense relief which this gospel brought to some people is shown by the ecstatic praise bestowed upon the Master as the one who came to deliver man from the great Dread. Yet it was curious that Epicurus did not altogether abolish the belief in gods. He was satisfied with proving that no gods did anything in our world. But he still believed that Beings greater than man, more beautiful, more blissful, existed somewhere — in the empty spaces between the worlds formed by the atom-streams. But we need not be afraid of them, because they could take no knowledge of anything that went on here. They could not hurt us. Nor could they help us, because no cries from our troubled world could reach their paradise of eternal peace. But we could have some knowledge of them, because the subtle films thrown off by their bodies could float down to us through the vastness of space and create the images of our dreams. They must be perfectly beautiful, and therefore of a shape like the human; for Epicurus made merry over the Stoic idea that divine beings were spherical, like balls. And since they must converse they must use the most perfect language, which would be more like Greek than any other. Enemies of Epicureanism sometimes said that Epicurus put forward this theory of the gods insincerely, to escape the odium which he would incur as a professed atheist. Yet there is no reason to

suppose he was not sincere. His theory gave him the possibility of a real religious emotion of a kind, an emotion quite void of fear—the ecstatic contemplation of a life ideally beautiful and happy, somewhere far away, the joy of pure admiration with no thought of anything to be got. We must remember too that the temper of Epicurus was very different from the rationalism of modern days which wants to do away with religion. Into this enters largely a zeal for scientific truth, as rationalists conceive it. Zeal for scientific truth in itself Epicurus regarded as a vanity. His object was solely and simply to do away with fear. It was idle, he said, to inquire curiously how a natural phenomenon was really caused: when you once saw some way in which it *might* be caused without bringing in the hypothesis of divine action, that was enough. When he had got a conception of the gods which gave no opening for fear, he would not be troubled by the question whether it was scientifically verifiable or not.

Epicureanism can never have been a popular philosophy, as Stoicism was. It appealed to a much smaller circle, and in the second century after Christ, when Stoicism was still vigorous, Epicureanism had become an eccentricity. Beside the special doctrines of these two schools, there was one theory regarding the gods worshipped by the people, which obtained vogue in the third century B.C. and was destined to be of far-reaching influence on thought in days to come—the theory which we still call Euhemerism. According to this, the gods of mythology were simply men who had lived a long while ago and had been deified by popular tradition. Whilst Stoicism got rid of the difficulty that discreditable stories were told of the gods by saying that the gods were gods but the stories,

if literally understood, were not true, Euhemerism largely accepted the stories as true, but said that the persons who acted and suffered in that way were not gods. Euhemerus of Messene, in the early years probably of the third century, published a romance called *A Sacred Chronicle*, in which he described his imaginary journey to the "Island of Panchaea," where he had seen in a temple an ancient golden tablet containing the whole history of the human kings who had come to be deified as Uranos, Kronos, Zeus, Apollo, and so on. Uranos (Heaven) had simply been an ardent student of star-lore, and had first induced men to worship the stars as deities; after his death his grandson Zeus had established a cult of Uranos himself, and given his name to the sky. Euhemerus amused himself by rewriting Greek mythology on these lines: Cadmus had really been a cook who ran away with a flute-girl whose name was Harmonia; Aphrodite had been the first person to institute brothels. The book was an immense literary success. Some people denounced it as impious: some accused Euhemerus of trying to perpetrate a fraud on the public; some, like poor Diodorus Siculus, two centuries and a half later, and certain of the Christian fathers, took it all for gospel truth. Probably Euhemerus no more intended his travels to be taken seriously than Voltaire did the story of Candide, though we may believe that he was as serious as Voltaire was in the views which he wanted his romance to convey.

Views like those of Euhemerus naturally spread widely in a society where since the Sophistic movement there had been a great deal of facile rationalism—a tendency increased by the scattering of so many Greeks far from the sphere of their ancestral traditions. Such views disposed men's minds to accept a new development in Greek

religion which became general after Alexander—the deification of contemporary persons, especially of kings and queens. Alexander himself probably claimed divine honours and after his death it became the usual practice for the forms of homage traditionally offered to gods—divine titles, temples, sacrifice—to be offered to the Hellenistic kings of Egypt and Asia. When the power of Rome spread eastwards, similar forms of homage were offered first to Rome personified as a goddess, then to Julius Caesar and the Roman emperors. Such a worship of the rulers must not be regarded as akin to the primitive superstition which regarded shamans and medicine-men as divine. It was rather an outcome of rationalism. Many educated people who had lost belief in the old mythology as literally true retained a vague belief in some diffused divine power (τὸ θεῖον), and they might recognise a manifestation of such divine power in any strong human personality. Or if they had no belief at all in the supernatural—as was very probably the case with Euhemerus himself—to treat a contemporary man as a *theos* would be simply to put him in the same class with men of long ago, like Zeus or Dionysus, who, on the theory of Euhemerus, had become gods. If these forms of homage were simply a traditional kind of language in which you expressed the pre-eminent power or influence of some particular man, surely, the rationalist might argue, as he threw incense upon an altar of an Alexander or a Caesar, these men have as good a right to such homage as anyone in the past. When the worship of the Macedonian rulers was first introduced at Athens, people of old-fashioned religion protested against it as blasphemous.

The same period which gave birth to Stoicism and

Epicureanism also saw the Scepticism which had been adumbrated by some of the fifth-century sophists formulated as a creed by Pyrrho of Elis. The school of Plato under Arcesilas (third century B.C.) and his immediate successors lapsed into the same mode of thought. It is important to realise that Greek Sceptics raised no protest against the existing practice of religion. They did not contend that the arguments against the existence of gods were in the least stronger than the arguments in favour of popular beliefs. Their point was that the arguments for and against were precisely balanced. It was just as likely that there were gods as that there were not. And if you knew nothing at all about the gods, you could not say that the popular beliefs about them were a bit more absurd than the opinions of philosophers. In these circumstances the wise man, they held, would conform to the religious practices of the society in which he lived, do all that ordinary men did, though without any opinion as to the truth or falsehood of what the ordinary man believed. No doubt a philosopher like Carneades (second century B.C.), who presided over the Platonic school, took especial delight in enforcing the negative argument, because he had in view opponents like the Stoics who stood strongly for the positive. But Carneades never committed himself to the negative argument; his purport was merely to show that it was every bit as good as the Stoic argument.

We have been speaking all this time about the attitude of philosophers and theorists towards the divine, but what was the attitude of the ordinary Greek citizen in these days, the man who was neither a philosopher nor a theorist? It is very hard for us to-day to know what we should find the religious quality of the environment to be

if we were plunged into the life of Athens or Ephesus or Alexandria in one of the centuries between Alexander the Great and the Emperor Julian. Our knowledge of antiquity comes mainly from literature, and the books were mainly written by philosophers and men of letters. It seems plain that even after Alexander the traditional stories of the gods continued to have credit with masses of men. When the Christian apologists attacked them as still living beliefs they had probably more justification than one would suppose if one went by the philosophers and men of letters alone. Even in the literature there are indications that men really were encouraged in sensuality by the example of the gods. Theognis already in the fifth or sixth century B.C. had appealed to the example of Zeus to excuse his own passion, and we get the same thing in the passages from Terence and Theocritus given in this volume. We may be sure that ordinary men continued also to be influenced by that part of the traditional religion which made for righteousness—the fear that perjury called down divine vengeance; this seems proved by the importance still attached by governments to formal oaths. The worship of the city's gods, and the stories told about them, were mixed up, we must remember, with a great deal of local patriotism, with public festivals and holidays, in which the Mediterranean peoples have always delighted, and lastly, where a shrine attracted large numbers of visitors, and little silver shrines of Artemis, for instance, found many buyers, with commercial profit. Each of these motives might be a strong one, and when they were combined in one they could create in a Greek citizen a feeling of attachment to his city's gods which could on occasion rise to passion. A passage from Lucian, to be given in

this book, shows how anyone throwing doubt on the mythological stories told about the special deities of a city could draw on himself considerable indignation and odium, as impious. To that extent the statement commonly made—that ancient Greek religion involved no obligation to believe, so long as the proper rites were performed—has to be qualified. Yet it may be questioned how far this feeling of attachment to the traditional deities can be properly described as religious. Neither local patriotism nor delight in a holiday nor desire for gain is in itself a religious motive. It would not be true to say that the Greeks after Alexander ceased to care about the old gods, but it might be true to say that anyone with strong religious feeling ceased to find the public cults of the cities satisfying.

Mr. Cornford's volume has shown how from the sixth century there existed, side by side with the public cults, a form of religion which embodied itself in brotherhoods and conventicles, which had secret doctrines and rites of purification—the type of religion of which the Orphic sects were the chief representatives. Pythagoreanism had embodied ideas of this kind, and they had formed an element in the philosophy of Plato. The general idea underlying all religion of this kind was that in man there was a divine element, come down from a higher world and imprisoned in the unclean and dark house of the body. Salvation consisted in obtaining, whether through ceremonies of purification, or through ascetic practices, or through special knowledge, the release of this divine element, so that it could get back to its original home and the company of immortal beings. Our documents give us little trace of this type of religion for two and a half centuries after Alexander: but it must

be remembered that our documents for this period are exceedingly scanty. Plato's second successor and immediate disciple, Xenocrates, seems to have specially developed that part of his master's philosophy which meant speculation about the unseen world; but with Arcesilas, as we noted, the Academy passed over to Scepticism. Then, in the last century B.C., there was a revival of those views about Soul and Body for which the Orphics, the early Pythagoreans and Plato had stood. This revival is embodied in the figure of the great Stoic Posidonius, the friend of Pompey and Cicero. For Posidonius departed from the original Stoic teaching in order to make room in his philosophy for a large Platonic element. Whereas the first Stoics had maintained that the Soul was one, that it might indeed make erroneous judgments, but had not to contend with any principle of evil in itself or in the body, and that its surviving of the body was questionable, Posidonius once more asserted that the Reason in man was a daemon which would continue to have a personal existence after the death of the body, and that there was in man a definite principle of evil; he taught a descent of the divine element from the outer heavens through the spheres to our troubled earth, and set forth how by true philosophy the soul after death might reascend to the divine world. A contemporary of Posidonius and also a friend of Cicero's, Nigidius Figulus, professed to have re-established the true doctrine of Pythagoras; but this Neo-Pythagoreanism really drew more from Plato than from Pythagoras. We see again this revived doctrine of the divine Soul, of its bondage in the body, of the way of salvation by its reunion with God, in the writings of the Alexandrine Jew Philo, within whose lifetime fell the earthly life of Jesus

Christ. During the centuries which followed before the triumph of Christianity, revived Platonism was the only serious rival to Stoicism as a philosophy for religious men within the sphere of Greek culture. In the second century A.D. it is exemplified for us in Plutarch; in the third century it attains its fully developed form in the philosophy of Plotinus and his disciples, the philosophy to which we now give in a special sense the name of Neoplatonism. But though Platonism was at many points opposed to Stoicism—especially in regard to the Stoic materialism—the two had a good deal in common. If Stoicism would not admit a conflict of elements within the person, or regard body as evil, Stoicism did teach that the Reason in man was a particle of the Divine being, and that the passions connected with bodily appetite must be conquered if the man was to attain freedom. Common to both again was the earnest religious temper. So that in spite of their disagreement they tended to borrow from each other. There are Platonic elements in Posidonius: there are Stoic elements in Plotinus.

The thoughts of educated men generally came to be influenced by a number of ideas "in the air," which we cannot always describe as specifically Stoic or specifically Platonic, but rather as representing a vague popular amalgam of the two. For those who kept up the phraseology and the practices of the old religion, it came often to be filled with a higher content. Aelius Aristides, for instance, may stand for the ordinary pious man who had general culture without being a professed philosopher: he continues to believe in such old myths as the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus, and embodies it in his rhetorical hymn of praise: but he evidently understands it figuratively, not literally, though he probably

does take Athena to stand for a real divine person other than Zeus, not simply to be a poetical personification, like Wisdom in the Hebrew book of Proverbs. One of the most remarkable instances of the way in which the old religion could be made to carry high moral teaching is the passage in which Dio Chrysostom protests against the forcible prostitution of slaves, for he protests in the name of the dignity of human nature, as created by God, and he supports his protest by appealing to the traditional titles given to Zeus and Hera and Artemis and Rhea. If one thinks of the ordinary attitude to slaves, even amongst amiable and cultivated persons,[1] the use of the old religion to enforce respect for the human dignity of the slave-boy and slave-girl deserves particular note.

Both Stoicism and Platonism admitted the existence of numberless personal beings other than the Supreme God and men—both invisible ones in the air or in the aether, and the visible heavenly bodies, which were animate fiery globes. Plato in the *Symposium* had given an account of *daemons* as intermediaries between men and gods, and this passage had immense influence on Greek thought in the first centuries of the Christian era. The doctrine of these intermediate beings was probably one of the things which had been taken up by Plato's disciple, Xenocrates, but in the first centuries A.D. it came to take a prominent place in the thoughts of men. We find it argued at length by Plutarch, Maximus of Tyre, Apuleius, and elaborated by the Neoplatonists into a system of graded ranks in the world above man—the world of "superior" beings (*kreittones*): God, gods,

[1] "If you have a slave crucified because he takes a sly taste of the dish he is bringing you, you are justly thought to be abnormally ferocious. But if you cut a friend for some slight offence, *how much worse* an action!" (Horace, *Satires* I. iii. 80 ff.)

daemons, angels, heroes, disembodied souls. The doctrine of daemons served to give a rational explanation of the old mythology, for the daemons were beings inferior to the gods and it was generally thought that there were bad daemons as well as good ones, so that now all the discreditable stories about Zeus, Apollo and other gods could be transferred to daemons who, it was suggested, had pretended to be the gods in question; all the ritual practices which seemed unlovely, such as animal sacrifice, could be explained as addressed to daemons of gross appetites, not to gods. When the Christians maintained that inside the idol was a devil who took pleasure in the fumes of sacrifice, they were really saying little more than was said by Plutarch and Porphyry. Daemons again played a prominent part in theories of inspiration and revelation, for men in sleep or in abnormal trance-state could receive communications from the unseen beings of which the air was full. Or again, the practice of magic which became so widespread in these centuries was largely an invocation of daemons, a mode by which it was believed they could be compelled to appear in visible form and subserve the purposes of men.

Below nearly all the religion and philosophy of the time was a general view of the scheme of things common to all—a remote divine world, the human soul a being which belonged to that world but had fallen into a material body, and in between that remote world and the world of men a whole host of superhuman beings in a series of ranks peopling the atmosphere. The practical deduction from this view was that sin was identified with bodily appetite, which had to be suppressed if the soul was to be set free; even during lifetime the soul might regain its union with the divine, be reborn to immor-

tality. Of course this general scheme was very variously worked out and filled in. Sometimes it was combined with primitive cults of vegetation spirits — Dionysus Zagreus in the Greek tradition, the Egyptian Osiris, the Phrygian Attis—in which the annual death and resurrection of the god had been celebrated by frenzied mourning and rejoicing. Such emotional self-identification with a god was one way in which men in the Greco-Roman world sought an escape from the limitations of the ordinary consciousness and union with the divine. A similar rebirth could be got in the worship of Isis or the worship of Mithras (an old Aryan deity who had come to the Roman Empire from Persia through Asia Minor, gathering new elements on his way). It was an age when cults from the East found ready acceptance in the lands round about the Mediterranean. They were carried on largely by voluntary associations—*thiasoi*, *synodoi*—with secret rites performed in honour of the special deity or deities of the association, new members being admitted by initiation under oath not to divulge the ritual. Communal meals and banquets, at which the deity was conceived to be present as guest, formed a principal element in the life of these associations, and often, it would seem, the motive which drew men together was convivial rather than religious, the worship of the deity of the association merely furnishing a formal centre for the organisation of a social club. The large numbers of inscriptions put up by Greek mystic associations under the Roman Empire are disappointing to anyone who hopes to gain from them the evidences of an intense religious life comparable to the life of the early Christian churches.

The general view of the world just described found

its most elaborate mythological setting in the doctrines of the Gnostic sects which amalgamated certain Christian elements with ideas borrowed from Hellenistic mystery-religions. The underlying scheme is still the same—a remote divine world and the soul of man a particle of the divine fallen into matter, but with the Gnostics the world between the Supreme God and man was filled in with various complicated systems of emanations, and detailed stories were told how the fall of some divine being came about in the beginning, to account for this odd imprisonment of the higher element in the alien sphere. To such a view the material world seemed dominated by evil, and the practical inference was in some cases an unnatural asceticism, in some cases lawless indulgence.

There was one Oriental religion which stood by itself in striking contrast to all the rest—the Hebrew religion, and at the Christian era, the Jews, dispersed as they were in large numbers throughout the Nearer East and the Roman Empire, were exercising a marked influence upon Greco-Roman society. In Alexandria, where one of the five quarters of the city was almost wholly Jewish, the great attempt was made to read into the Old Testament that popular amalgam of Platonism, Neo-Pythagoreanism and Stoicism, which was diffused in educated Greek circles. The chief result of this attempt we still have in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (about 20 B.C. to A.D. 40). They represent a much purer embodiment of what we have described as the general underlying idea than Gnosticism does. But for all that he borrowed from Greek philosophy, Philo's emotional attitude to God remained essentially Hebraic, and if by liberating itself from the suggestions of the body and the material

environment the Soul could attain the vision of God, that God was still for Philo the living God of Abraham and Moses and the Hebrew psalmists. The influence of this Jewish Alexandrine teaching probably passed through the pagan Numenius and others to Plotinus, the great formulator of Neoplatonism in the third century A.D.

In Neoplatonism the underlying idea furnished the basis for a new system free from the mythological extravagances of Gnosticism. Plotinus too had his system of emanations between the Supreme One and this lower world, and it cannot be said that the scheme was entirely without a mythological element. But it was based on real thought about the spirit of man. The life of the Soul, as man experienced it, was a more or less confused multiplicity of thoughts, sensations, desires, like the more or less confused multiplicity of things in the material world, and this material world was actually constituted, in Plotinus's view, by the action of Soul upon the dark substratum he called, like his predecessors, Stuff (*Hyle*)—not Matter in our sense of the word, but an indefinite possibility of existence, which was only actual so far as qualified existence was given it by Soul. But amongst the multiplicity which marked Soul-life there was a principle of stability and unification—the abstract ideas of the Mind, which remained independent of the flow of things. In the contemplation of these enduring verities, in what Plotinus called *noēsis*, the Soul found rest, and Plotinus therefore regarded the Soul herself as an irradiation going out from a more central unity, Mind, *Nous*, just as the sensible world was an irradiation going out from Soul. For earlier philosophers, this activity of the Mind had been the highest activity possible; the Supreme God had been

habitually described as the Supreme Mind (as with Numenius). But for Plotinus this was not the ultimate. The Mind itself was an irradiation going out from something more divine, more utterly one, and to attain to this One man had to rise above the activity of Mind, above Intellection, to the ecstasy in which all plurality or duality was done away. That was God, the First, the Good. Probably Plotinus thought largely in pictures and saw this One as a central luminary from which rays went out into the surrounding darkness, making first the luminous circle of Mind, from which again rays less luminous went out to make Soul, and again rays from Soul, less luminous still, to constitute from the dark Stuff, at the extreme limit of the divine irradiation, the sensible world. In speaking of the Supreme One, Plotinus's difficult task was to describe the indescribable. There was only one way in which this could be done—to throw out descriptive terms at the Object, and then explain that the terms used had not been true. You left in that way a kind of idea in the mind of the hearer which the hearer knew he must not press as a statement of literal fact. You ascribed to the One a quality such as goodness, and in the same breath insisted that the One could have no qualities at all, because the possession of qualities is incompatible with perfect unity. That is, your apprehension of the One could not be expressed in thought at all, but only got in the moment of rapture, itself indescribable, when the Soul was united with its Source.

The intellectual and spiritual level of Plotinus was not maintained by his followers. His disciple Porphyry, a man of high character and great erudition, got entangled in speculations about the denizens of the unseen world,

and this went farther in the next generation with Iamblichus. At the same time, the Neoplatonic school more and more furnished the rallying-centre for the defence of the old religion against Christianity.

In the end the doctrine of the Christian Church prevailed—taking up into itself, as has been said, large elements of the Greek philosophical tradition which it overthrew. As compared with Greek polytheism, outside the circles of philosophers, it was more strictly rational. In view of an idea sometimes held, that the triumph of Christianity represented the triumph of blind superstition over the enlightened reason of the ancient world, it is odd to read the refutation of the Greek and Roman polytheism in St. Augustine's *City of God* and find him striking down its absurdities by cold severe reason. No doubt the beliefs of the best Pagan philosophers were not open to the charges brought by the Christian apologists generally against the old Paganism, and if one knew no more of Christianity than what one could gather from the apologist Athenagoras or from the passage of criticism by Eusebius given in this book, one might suppose that all that happened was that a form of philosophical belief hardly distinguishable in general character from Neoplatonism imposed itself upon the Greco-Roman world. If a Christian of the type of Athenagoras or Eusebius had written a letter of spiritual counsel to his wife, it might have differed very little from the letter which Porphyry wrote to Marcella.

The Christians said they stood for belief in One God against the Pagan belief in many gods, but an educated Pagan might reply that he too believed in only one Supreme God, the subordinate Divine beings whom

he called Gods, or Daemons, or Heroes merely filled the gap between the One Supreme Father and men. And how did that differ from the Christian belief? For the Christians too put a graded hierarchy of superhuman Beings between God and man, only they called them Cherubim, Seraphim, Angels, Saints. At first sight, indeed, there might seem little difference, except in names, between the educated Pagan and the Christian view of the spiritual world. Yet significant differences there were. Augustine laid stress on the fact that the Christians never *sacrificed* to any superhuman being, except to God Himself. Sacrifice expressed a devotional attitude which the Pagans did not reserve for the One Supreme, and the Christians did. And even if in the Roman communion Angels and Saints form a various multitude peopling the world to which man turns in prayer, Roman theology affirms that the exaltation of God above the highest created being in the Universe (the Virgin-Mother) is infinite, whereas the distance down from the Blessed Virgin to the lowest human creature is one only of finite degrees.

Yet it would be difficult, as has been said, to get from Eusebius's criticism of Pagan religion an idea of the new thing which Christianity brought. Eusebius attacks material conceptions of the divine, but the Neoplatonists would endorse every word of the protest and assert as strongly as Eusebius the non-material character of the Divine Being. The only respect perhaps in which we could discover from this statement anything special about Christianity would be that it was more drastic in getting rid of the old Greek mythology and ritual practice, for which Neoplatonism still fought strongly, declaring that these venerable things had their value as symbols.

But these Christian apologists, whose own minds are to a large extent minds of Greek philosophers, do not show us what the things about Christianity really were which distinguished it from Greek religion, even at its best. They may no doubt have felt in their subconsciousness its peculiar quality, but when they write as Greek philosophers they cannot set it forth. Beneath all the Greek philosophical trappings Christianity was something profoundly different—remained essentially Hebraic. It believed in a Purpose of God for the world, a movement of the world-process from God's initial mighty act of Creation to the ultimate kosmic triumph of the kingdom of God. The chief Christian creed did indeed come to embody a technical term of Greek philosophy, but for the most part it is a statement of certain things done at a particular moment of human history. That belief in the transcendent importance of particular historical events is Hebraic, not Greek. There is no greater mistake than to say that the Christian creeds show that Christianity had lost its original Hebrew character and become a Greek mystery-religion. Neither Greek mythology nor Greek philosophy nor Greek mystery-religions had a hope for the world. A hope for the individual of his escape to the divine world, perhaps; but no hope for the world. The world-process was not leading anywhere. The Stoics more than any school insisted that everything which happened was determined by Providence, by Supreme Reason; yet they stultified such a belief by their doctrine of the eternal recurrence. The process in each kosmic period did not show any progress to greater good, but simply ended in a conflagration, and then, after a time, the same, or a very similar, process began over again. One can hardly speak of a Purpose in the case of

the Stoic God, though one may speak of a World Plan—a Plan run off over and over again, like an eternally repeated gramophone record. In a Stoic of the noble temper of Marcus Aurelius the depression of spirit which such a view entailed comes into clear evidence: he is haunted by the idea of the futile recurrence of everything, the infinite tedium of human history. The Hebrew God has a Purpose, human history is the series of His wonderful works of Power and Love, and everything is moving to an end unspeakably glorious. That declaration Christianity repeated to the Greek world and it came as something really new. The Greek world ended by believing it, or professing to believe it.[1]

As against the popular Greek polytheism, the triumph of Christianity was the triumph of reason; as against Greek philosophy, the triumph of hope. Yet when one compares the religion of the Western world after the establishment of Christianity with the Greek religion illustrated in this volume, two great deductions have to be made from the benefits brought by Christianity. One is the promulgation of a doctrine that the great majority of the human race were doomed to eternal torment:

[1] Since I wrote the above I have come across the following quotation from Professor Rickert, perhaps the most eminent living German writer on the philosophy of history:

"Precisely in this uniqueness, this incomparableness of the objects reside all our feelings and standards as to the ultimate worth of anything and of all things. And even the totality of the historic process derives its worth for us from its unrepeatableness; indeed, it was this principle of Uniqueness—a unique Fall, a unique Redemption, a unique life's Trial here, and a unique Judgment hereafter—which decided the victory in favour of the Christian philosophy, in its Patristic stage and form, as against Hellenism, with its ever-increasing insistence upon the Universal and upon indefinite Repetition or, at least, repeatableness" (quoted in F. von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses*, Second Series, pp. 30, 31).

the Pagan Greeks had imagined many horrors, but they had never dreamed of that; the Christians replaced tedium by terror. God, as they depicted Him, was indeed far removed from the sensual immoralities which popular polytheism had attributed to Zeus, but He was capable of looking with complacency at a world in which such a fate awaited the majority of His human creatures. The Christians called their message a gospel, but even if it told of a way by which those who chose could escape the general doom, such a disclosure could only in a very qualified sense be called *good news*. And just as the Pagan Greek's conception of his deities had tended to make his own character sensual, so the Christian's conception of his God tended to make him cruel, in his judgment of misbelievers.

Yet even if it was an individual act of faith by which a believer escaped, according to this presentation of Christianity, from the general doom, it remained true, even so, that the Christian conception of salvation was not individual as the Greek conception had been. For the person saved was incorporated in a Divine Community, and an eternal *communal* bliss was the goal to which the time-process moved. The production of that immortal perfected community made the time-process seem worth while, even if the great majority of the human race were thrown off as waste products to destruction in the course of the process. And though a hope with such a deduction may seem unsatisfactory, it is hardly as unreasonable as the materialistist hope, which sees a satisfactory goal for human history, if, after the sufferings of mankind have been extended through unnumbered thousands of years, the fortunate final generations, who inhabit the planet for a limited period

of time before it perishes, live in a state of general comeliness and comfort.

The other deduction which has to be made is that the governing powers now compelled men by pains and penalties to profess the belief of the Church. Even if the theory of the universe maintained by the Church was in itself a more reasonable one than that of any Pagan Greek philosophy, the fact that men were compelled by force to profess it put a new unwarrantable constraint upon the human mind. In the Pagan Greek world, to profess disbelief in what was generally believed about the gods might (as some of the extracts in this book will show) bring upon a man a certain amount of popular odium, yet there was on the whole liberty for the mind to range at large, and men did not incur punishment for putting forward any theory of the universe, however foolish. No doubt where thought (or rather the profession of thought) is free, many foolish theories will be put forward as well as true ones; but truth loses half its virtue under conditions of constraint.

Most modern Christians regard the belief that the majority of the human race are doomed to eternal torment as a mistake, not an essential part of Christian doctrine, and think that the Church went wrong when it sought to have men compelled by force to profess orthodoxy. They will not therefore consider that Christianity itself is discredited by the two deductions which have to be made from the benefits which Christianity actually brought the world in the centuries which succeeded its triumph over the old Paganism. Here, however, our concern is not to discuss what ought to have happened, what would have happened if Christianity in the fourth

and succeeding centuries had been true to its original spirit; it is simply to note what did happen. It seems impossible to understand the significance of the last phases of Greek Pagan thought without taking some account of what followed it.

EDWYN BEVAN.

LATER GREEK RELIGION

I. THE EARLY STOICS

(1) Zeno of Citium

Zeno, founder of the Stoic School, was a Hellenised Phoenician, a citizen of Citium in Cyprus. Born, according to Susemihl, in 336/5 B.C., he founded his school at Athens some time before 294 B.C., and died at Athens in 263 B.C. His school is known as that of the Stoa (the "Porch"), from the Painted Porch (that is, Colonnade) at Athens, where he taught. Only fragments of his writings are preserved, embedded as quotations in later books. After each fragment here given there is indicated the source from which it comes.

God and the World

Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (J. von Arnim), vol. i. *frag.* 157.

Zeno the Stoic defined God as the *fiery Mind* (*Nous*) *of the world.* (Aëtius.)

Frag. 153.

Plato held that God was non-material (without *sōma*); Zeno that he was a bodily substance (*sōma*). (Galen.)

Frag. 163.

Zeno says that the whole universe forms the substance of God. (Diogenes Laërtius.)

Frag. 154.

Zeno and the Stoics generally hold that the Supreme

God is *aether* (fiery air), endowed with Mind, by which the universe is governed. (CICERO.)

Frag. 155.

God runs through the material world, as honey runs through the honeycomb. (TERTULLIAN.)

Frag. 158.

God runs through the universe, at one point as mind (*nous*), at another point as animal life (*psȳchē*), at another as vegetable life (*physis*),[1] at another as the inorganic state of being (*hexis*). (THEMISTIUS.)

Frag. 159.

God is a kind of air or breath (*pneuma*) interpenetrating even things ugly and loathsome.[2] (TATIAN.)

Frag. 162.

The General Law (*nomos*), which is Right Reason (*orthos logos*), pervading everything, is the same as Zeus, the Supreme Head of the government of the universe. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

[1] The word *physis* is here used in a narrower sense, of vegetable life, in contrast with animal life: the ordinary meaning of *physis* in Stoic philosophy is the "Nature" pervading the Universe.

[2] The Christian doctrine used the same term, "God is *Pneuma*" (John iv. 24): but one must not be led astray by the verbal resemblance. In Christianity *pneuma* is something non-material, because Christianity has behind it the Hebrew tradition with its conception of *ruakh* ("spirit"); in the New Testament *pneuma* stands for that Hebrew term—the translation of it adopted by Greek-speaking Jews: with the Stoics (and with Greeks generally) *pneuma* is something material, a gaseous body.

Frag. 152.

Zeno used to propound the following argument:

" It is reasonable to honour the gods:
but it is not reasonable to honour beings which do not exist:
therefore gods exist." (SEXTUS EMPIRICUS.)

Frag. 165.

Zeno attributed a divine potency to the stars, and also to years, months and annual seasons. (CICERO.)

Frag. 98.

The element of all the things which exist is Fire, and the origins of this fire are Stuff (*hylē*) and God.[1] Both of these are bodily substances: God the active substance, and Stuff the passive substance. At certain destined periods of time the whole universe is turned to fire (the *ekpyrōsis*); then again it is once more constituted an ordered manifold world (the *diakosmēsis*). But the primal fire subsists in it like a kind of seminal fluid, containing in itself the formulas (*logoi*) and causes of all the things which have been and are and shall be; the concatenation and sequence of these things is Destiny or Understanding or Truth, an inevitable and ineluctable Law of things. Thus the whole universe is governed excellently well, like a city-state in which Law reigns supreme. (EUSEBIUS, from ARISTOCLES.)

Frag. 102.

God, Mind, Destiny, Zeus—it is One Thing which is called by these and by many other names. In the

[1] This sentence is a confused and inaccurate account of the Stoic theory. God was identical with the Primal Fire, but part of the Fire in a *diakosmēsis* turned into passive Stuff.

beginning He was by Himself, alone; then He turned His whole substance through air into water. And just as the seed is contained in the genital fluid, so God, as the Seminal Formula (*spermatikos logos*) of the kosmos, remains, such as He is, in the watery mass, modifying the stuff of it so that it yields to his working, for the production of the next things. Then He generates, first of all, the four elements—fire, water, air, earth. Zeno treats of these things in his work *Concerning the Whole of Things* (*Peri tū holū*). (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

Frag. 175.

Destiny (*heimarmenē*) is the concatenated (*eiromenē*) causality of things, or the scheme (*logos*, formula) according to which the kosmos is directed. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

Frag. 176.

Zeno defined Destiny as "a power which moves Stuff." "Providence (*pronoia*)" and "Nature (*physis*)" are other names which he gave to the same thing. (THEODORETUS.)

Frag. 171.

Nature is a technic fire (*pȳr technikon*), which proceeds by an orderly path to the production of things. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

(That is, the fiery air interpenetrating the Universe, identical with God, is at the same time a Mind which produces the right thing at the right place at the right moment, like a supreme craftsman or artist, who knows his business thoroughly and whose skill of hand is unfailing.)

Frag. 110.

The Universe is very beautiful, a work perfected according to Nature, an Animal alive and conscious, endowed

with mind and reason, according to the most acceptable theory of things. (SEXTUS EMPIRICUS.)

Frag. 111.

Again Zeno says:

"That which is endowed with reason is superior to that which is without reason:
nothing is superior to the kosmos:
therefore the kosmos is endowed with reason."
(SEXTUS EMPIRICUS.)

Frag. 112.

If an olive-tree produced flutes which gave out a tuneful melody, would you doubt that there must be in the olive-tree some knowledge of music? Again, if plane-trees produced strings which made harmonious modulations, you would hold that there must be a musician's mind in plane-trees. How then can the kosmos be judged to be anything but conscious and intelligent, when it generates out of itself conscious and intelligent beings? (CICERO.)

The Individual Soul

Frag. 126.

The seed of living beings is that *fire* which is soul (*psyche*, conscious life) and mind. (VARRO.)

Frag. 135.

The soul (*psychē*) is a hot gaseous substance (*pneuma enthermon*). (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

Theory of the many Gods

Frag. 166.

"Polytheism came by a mode of thought which was concerned with the physical world. When these numerous

gods were invested with a human similitude they supplied myths to the poets, but human life as a whole they filled with every kind of superstition. This topic was first treated by Zenon, and was afterwards set forth more fully by Cleanthes and Chrysippus. When, for instance, we find Greece pervaded by an ancient belief that Heaven (Uranos) was emasculated by his son Saturn (Kronos), and that Saturn in turn was manacled by his son Jove (Zeus), what we really have is a not infelicitous description of physical nature, embodied in blasphemous myths. The meaning was that the highest all-creative element of aether or fire, of which the heavenly bodies are composed, was complete in itself, and had no such member as implied the need of union with something else for procreation. By Saturn they intended the power which contained the course and mutations of times and seasons. In Greek the god is actually called *Kronos*, which is the same as *Chronos*, Time.[1] . . . When he was said to have been manacled by Jove, that meant that Time was limited by the movements of the stars. . . . For Jove himself . . . he is denoted in the line of Ennius:

Yon high, shining vast above us, which men pray to, and call Jove;

or more obscurely in another passage:

That which shines up there, my soul shall curse it, whatsoe'er it be.

Euripides too—one of his many fine things—

> Thou seest yon infinite Aether high above,
> Engirdling Earth with soft, intangible arms,
> Hold this for Zeus; give this the name of God.[2]

The Air again, as the Stoics expound, coming as it does between the Sea and the Sky, is deified under the

[1] This etymology is, of course, philologically quite unsound.
[2] See Cornford, *Greek Religious Thought from Homer to the Age of Alexander*, p. 154.

name of Juno (Hera), sister and wife of Jove, because Air is related to Aether both by resemblance and by conjunction. They made it female, as Juno, because nothing is softer than air. . . . Water remained, and Earth, to complete the three separate kingdoms spoken of in the myths. The whole kingdom of the Sea is therefore given to Neptune (Poseidon), the second brother, as they will have it, of Jove . . . and all that constitutes Earth, with its inherent forces, is made over to Father Dis, that is Dives (rich), or, as the Greeks call him, Plūtōn, because all things return back into the Earth and arise out of the Earth." (Words put by CICERO, *De Natura Deorum* ii. § 63, into the mouth of a Stoic.)

Frag. 167.

"When he (Zeno) comes to expound the *Theogonia* of Hesiod, he does away with all the ordinary received notions of the gods: for he does not reckon amongst the gods either Jove or Juno or Vesta (Hestia) or any other person bearing such names, but he teaches that these names are given to dumb inanimate *things*, by a kind of symbolism." (Words put by CICERO, *De Natura Deorum* i. § 36, into the mouth of an opponent of the Stoics.)

Frag. 170.

The Dioskūroi (Castor and Pollux) stand for right thoughts (*orthoi logoi*) and virtuous dispositions.

(PHILODEMUS.)

Divination

Frag. 174.

All kinds of divination the Stoics leave valid. There must be divination, they say, if there is such a thing as

Providence. They prove the reality of the art of divination by a number of cases in which predictions have come true, as Zeno asserts. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

No Temples or Images

Frag. 264.

Zeno, the founder of the Stoic sect, in his book *The Commonwealth* (*Hē Politeia*), says that men ought not to make temples or images, because no apparatus can be worthy of the gods. He does not shrink from writing—to give his actual words: "To build temples there will be no need: for a temple must not be held a thing of great worth or anything holy. Nothing can be of great worth or holy which is the work of builders and mechanics." (CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.)

(The *Politeia*, describing an ideal Commonwealth, was one of Zeno's earliest works. It was written before he had fully reached the Stoic ground, when he was still more or less of a Cynic. One cannot be sure that the view of temples and images, put forward in this work, in connexion with an imaginary Utopia, gives us the attitude adopted by Zeno, in the maturity of his thought, to the worships actually established in the Greek city-states.)

(2) PERSAEUS OF CITIUM

Persaeus was in command of the Macedonian garrison at Corinth in 243 B.C.

Rationalistic Explanation of the Gods

Frag. 448.

Persaeus quite plainly does away with the divine altogether, or holds an agnostic position regarding it. In his book *Concerning the Gods* he describes as attractive the theory advanced first by Prodicus in his writings [1]—that the things which sustain life and are serviceable were

[1] See Cornford, *Greek Religious Thought*, p. 130.

regarded as gods and honoured as such, and, in the second place, the persons who had invented or discovered kinds of food or shelter or the other useful arts—Demeter, Dionysus, and so on. (Philodemus, an opponent of Stoicism.)

(3) Cleanthes of Assos

Born 331/0 B.C. (A. von Arnim, *frag.* 477), taught at Athens, died 232/1 B.C. at the age of ninty-nine.

Theory of the Universe

Frag. 493.

The Stoics hold that there are two first substances of the universe, the active one and the passive one. The passive one is the unqualified substance, Stuff (*hyle*); the active one is the principle of rational order in it (*logos*), that is, God. This divine principle is eternal, and throughout the whole of Stuff it fashions the particular things, like a craftsman. Cleanthes lays down this dogma in his book *Concerning the Indivisible Bodies* (*Peri tōn atomōn*). (Diogenes Laërtius.)

Frag. 495.

Cleanthes says that the Soul pervades the whole of the kosmos, and that we have our individual soul-life as a share in the World Soul. (Hermias, a Christian writer, in a polemic against the Pagan philosophers.)

Frag. 497.

Cleanthes writes somewhat as follows:

"After the universe has been turned into flame, then [at a new *diakosmēsis*] first the central part of it settles together, then the universe is extinguished, bit by bit,

progressively from the centre, till the whole is changed. When the whole has become a moist mass, the last of the Fire, reacting against the centre, again reverses the process, and so, while the mass undergoes a contrary change, the Fire gradually extends from the uppermost region and begins to make a kosmos of the whole. Whilst the universe goes through such a periodic *diakosmēsis* the energetic tendency (*tonos*) in the substance of the universe never ceases. For, just as, in the case of the individual, all his bodily parts take shape in the proper periods of time from the seed, so all the particular parts of the universe—animals, plants, and so on—take shape at the proper moments. And as certain formulas (*logoi*) of the several bodily parts come together in the seed, and are again separated after the parts have been formed, so all the many things of the universe come into being from the One, and the One is again constituted from the Many, the process being gone through regularly and harmoniously." (Stobaeus.)

Frag. 499.

Cleanthes held that the Ruling Principle (*hēgemonikon*) of the kosmos was the Sun, because the Sun was the largest of the heavenly bodies and contributed most to the government of the universe, making the day and the year and the other seasons. (Eusebius.)

Frag. 504.

Cleanthes thinks that the heavenly bodies are wholly composed of fire, and that this is corroborated by the evidence of two of our senses—touch and sight. For the brightness of the Sun exceeds that of any fire, shining as it does all over so vast a world, whilst its touch is such as not only to warm, but frequently even to burn. It would

not do either one thing or the other, if it were not made of fire. "Therefore," he says, "since the Sun is fiery and is nourished by the exhalations of the Ocean (because no fire can continue long without some kind of food), he must either be similar to the common fire which we use for domestic purposes or to the fire contained in the bodies of men and animals. But our domestic fire has the property of destroying and consuming everything; wherever it penetrates it brings with it derangement and disruption. On the other hand, the vital salutary fire in bodies is always preservative; it nourishes, confers growth and strength and consciousness." It cannot, therefore, he says, be doubtful to which of these fires the Sun is like, from the effect which he produces, making everything flourish and mature, each after its own kind. Wherefore, since the fire of the Sun is like the fire in the bodies endowed with soul-life, the Sun too must have soul-life, and so must all the other heavenly bodies which arise in the incandescent substance which we describe as Aether or Heaven. (CICERO.)

Argument for Belief in the Gods

Frag. 528.

Our Cleanthes [a Stoic is imagined as speaker] said that the conception of gods had been formed in the souls of men from four causes. The first cause (of which I have just spoken) was to be found in the *clairvoyance* which reveals things future; the second cause was a consideration of the greatness of the benefits we receive from the temperature of the sky, the fertility of the earth and the many other boons of nature; the third, the awe instilled into the minds of men by lightning, tempests, thunderclouds, snow-storms, hail, devastations, pestilence, shakings

and rumblings of the earth, showers of stones, bloody rain, landslides and sudden gapings of the ground, unnatural monstrosities in men and animals, fiery lights seen in the sky, those stars which the Greeks call *komētai* ["long-haired"] and we Latins *cincinnatae* ["having long curly locks"] . . . double suns. Such phenomena have terrified men and led them to believe in the existence of some heavenly divine Power. The fourth cause, and the most important of all, was their observing the regularity of the movements and revolutions of the heavens, of the Sun and the Moon, the difference, variety, beauty, order of all the stars. It was enough to look at these things to have proof that they could not come by mere chance. (CICERO.)

Frag. 529.

Cleanthes used to argue as follows: If there is a difference in value between one nature and another, there must be some nature which is the best of all. If one soul differs from another soul in value, there must be some Soul which is the best of all. If one living being (*zōon*) differs in value from another living being, there must be some Living Being which is the best of all. For a series of this kind cannot be prolonged to infinity. Therefore, just as there cannot be an indefinite increase in the value of natures, which never arrives at a term, nor in that of souls, so neither can there be in that of living beings. One living being then is higher in the scale of value than another—a horse, let us say, than a tortoise, a bull than an ass, and a lion than a bull, whilst of all living beings indigenous to the earth we may take the highest and lordliest, in quality of body and soul, to be Man. Man, therefore, would be the highest and best of all living

beings. And yet Man hardly seems to deserve such a title. To begin with, he walks all his days in evil—or, at any rate, most of his days, for if he does ever come into possession of virtue, it will be late in his life, when it is near its setting. He is a pitiable creature, feeble, needing a thousand helps, such as food, shelter, and all things incidental to care of the body. Such necessity stands over us, like some bitter tyrant who demands his tribute from day to day. If we will not yield ourselves to be washed and anointed and dressed and fed, it threatens disease and death. Man, therefore, is not the perfect living being; he is only too far away from perfection. The perfect and supreme Living Being must be something better than Man, a Being who possesses all virtues complete, immune from any kind of evil. Such a Being would coincide with God. Therefore God is. (SEXTUS EMPIRICUS.)

Frag. 530.

Cleanthes sometimes gives the name of "God" to the kosmos itself, in other places to the Mind and Intelligence of Nature as a whole, elsewhere he judges that the "God" we are most certain of is the incandescent substance, called Aether, occupying the outermost, highest region, an envelope surrounding and embracing the whole world. Again, in those books which he wrote *Against Pleasure* he talks like a man out of his mind. At one moment he confers an imaginary shape and appearance upon the gods; at another moment he attributes all the deity there is to the stars; at another moment he says that nothing is more godlike than Reason. (Words put by CICERO into the mouth of an opponent of Stoicism.)[1]

[1] There is, of course, no such contradiction as the Epicurean champion in Cicero's dialogue would make out. The fiery gaseous substance (Aether), according to the Stoics, was identical with

Hymn to God

Frag. 537.

Thou, O Zeus, art praised above all gods: many are Thy names and Thine is all power for ever.

The beginning of the world was from Thee: and with law Thou rulest over all things.

Unto Thee may all flesh speak: for we are Thy offspring.

Therefore will I raise a hymn unto Thee: and will ever sing of Thy power.

The whole order of the heavens obeyeth Thy word: as it moveth around the earth:

With little and great lights mixed together: how great art Thou, King above all for ever!

Nor is anything done upon earth apart from Thee: nor in the firmament, nor in the seas:

Save that which the wicked do: by their own folly.

But Thine is the skill to set even the crooked straight: what is without fashion is fashioned and the alien akin before Thee.

Thus hast Thou fitted together all things in one: the good with the evil:

That Thy word should be one in all things: abiding for ever.

Let folly be dispersed from our souls: that we may repay Thee the honour, wherewith Thou hast honoured us:

Mind and Reason, and therefore with God. It existed in its purity on the periphery of the world, but also interpenetrated the world as its governing Law, and constituted the Reason in each individual man. The perfect shape was the sphere. God, therefore, in the sense of the whole animated kosmos, was spherical, and the stars which were individually gods, being composed of the Divine Fire, had also spherical shape.

Singing praise of Thy works for ever: as becometh the sons of men.

(Stobaeus: translation (abridged) by Walter Pater, *Plato and Platonism.*)

Prayer of Cleanthes

Frag. 527.

Lead me, O Zeus, and lead me, Destiny,
Whither ordainèd is by your decree.
I'll follow, doubting not, or if with will
Recreant I falter—I shall follow still.

(Epictetus: translation taken from Mr. P. E. Matheson's *Epictetus, the Discourses and Manual*, Clarendon Press, 1916.)

(4) Chrysippus of Soli (in Cilicia)

Born about 280 B.C., taught at Athens, died about 205 B.C. Chrysippus was the chief systematiser of the Stoic doctrine. His writings are said to have filled 705 rolls. Only fragments remain.

Theology the Crown of Philosophy

Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (J. von Arnim) vol. ii. *frag.* 108.

Doctrine concerning the Divine is rightly called a *teletē* [which means "initiation into a mystery-religion," but is also connected with the word *telos* which means "end"]. For such doctrine ought to come at the *end* and be taught as the consummation, when the Soul has acquired stability and is well in hand and can maintain silence to the uninitiated. It is indeed a great enterprise to follow rightly, and really master, teaching delivered about the gods. (*Etymologicum Magnum.*)

Argument for the Existence of God

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1011.

If there is anything which man cannot do, he who can do it must be better than man:

but man cannot make the things which constitute the kosmos:

He who could make them is therefore superior to man.

But what can be superior to humanity except deity?

Therefore God is. (CICERO.)

Argument from the Beauty of the World

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1012.

Suppose you see a large and beautiful house, could anyone induce you to believe, even if you could not see the owner of it, that it had been built for rats and weasels? When, therefore, you see all the rich appointments of the world, such variety and beauty in the heavens, such power and immensity in the sea and the earth, would you not seem to have lost your senses, if you thought this a home for yourself alone and not for the gods? (CICERO.)

The Stoic Creed

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1027.

The Stoics profess belief in a God endowed with mind (*nous*), a technic Fire, proceeding by an orderly path to the production of the kosmos, containing in itself all the seminal formulas (*spermatikoi logoi*), according to which each particular thing is generated according to Destiny, a gaseous substance (*pneuma*) pervading the whole of the kosmos, and receiving various appellations according to the varieties of the Stuff which it penetrates.

The kosmos is a god; the stars are gods; the Earth is a god: but the Supreme God is the Mind inhabiting the Aether. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

God and the perishable Gods

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1049.

Chrysippus holds that none of the gods is imperishable, except the Fire; all the rest have equally a beginning and an end. You may find this—one might say everywhere —in his writings. But I will give his own words, taken from his work *Concerning the Gods*, Book III.: "In another sense some are spoken of as having a beginning and an end, some as without beginning. It might be most in conformity with the nature of the subject, to indicate this afresh. The Sun, the Moon, and the other gods of a similar category have a beginning [and end]: Zeus is eternal." (PLUTARCH.)

Gods concrete with Material Things

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1055.

The Stoics who take the gods to be certain states of the air or of water, and suppose certain forces of the Fire to be intermingled with things, make the gods have a beginning together with the kosmos and be burnt up in the kosmic Conflagration. They do not think of them as detached and independent beings, charioteers, as it might be, or steersmen; but, as if they were comparable to statues nailed and soldered to their pedestals, they regard the gods as shut up in bodily substance, pegged down immovably in matter, participating even in its wastage, immune from no kind of dissolution and change. (PLUTARCH: words of an opponent of Stoicism.)

Zeus without the Kosmos

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1064.

Zeus and the kosmos are analogous to the individual man; Providence is analogous to the [human] Soul. When the great Conflagration takes place, Zeus, being the only imperishable god, retires upon Providence. Then Zeus and Providence, united, both continue with no embodiment but the substance of the Aether alone (PLUTARCH.)

Polytheism explained

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1076.

Chrysippus in his work *Concerning the Gods*, Book I., says that Zeus is the Reason (*logos*) which pervades the universe, the Soul of the World, and that all things have life (*to zēn*) by participation in Him [He pervades everything]—even stones. For which reason He is spoken of as *Zēna*, or as *Dia*, because He is the Cause and Lord of all things.[1] The Kosmos is alive with soul-life; it is a god, both its Ruling Principle and its whole Soul. Zeus is also named [*word obliterated*] and the general Nature (*physis*) of all things and Destiny and Necessity. Discipline, Justice, Concord, Peace, everything of that kind, is the same. The gods are without difference of sex, just as cities or virtues are; it is only that masculine and feminine names are bestowed upon them, without any corresponding difference in the beings named, just as we may speak of the moon as *selēnē* (feminine) or as *mēn* (masculine). Ares represents war and the opposition between one array of things and another. Hephaistos is fire; Kronos is the

[1] *Zēna* is a poetical accusative of *Zeus*; *Dia* is the ordinary accusative in prose. The Stoics explained that it was Zeus *through whom* (*di' hon*) all things had their being.

flux of the stream of things; Rhea is the Earth, Zeus the Aether — or, as some would have it, Apollo[1]; Demeter is the Earth, or the gaseous substance (*pneuma*) in the earth. It is mere childish simplicity, he says, when gods are spoken of, or represented in painting and sculpture, as human in form—just as cities are, or rivers, or places, or passions. The air surrounding the earth is Zeus; the dark air is Hades; the air pervading the earth and sea is Poseidon. Chrysippus assimilates the other gods also, as he does those aforesaid, to inanimate things. Moreover he holds that the Sun and the Moon and the Stars are gods. Law also is a god. Yet again he says that men have changed to gods. (PHILODEMUS.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1078.

In Book II. he tries, like Cleanthes, to accommodate to his doctrines the stories of Orpheus and Musaeus, and the mythology found in Homer, Hesiod, Euripides and other poets. Everything, he says, is Aether; and Aether is both Father and Son,[2] so that in Book I. it was no contradiction when Rhea was described both as the Mother and as the Daughter of Zeus. (PHILODEMUS.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1095.

Chrysippus says that Apollo is so named, as being *not* one of the *many* common kinds of fire—the first letter of his name retaining the sense it has as a negative prefix

[1] Or, reading *phōs* for *tūs* (as von Arnim suggests), "Apollo is Light."

[2] "The same being both Father and Son." It would hardly occur to any reasonable being to connect this phrase, coming upon it in its context, with John x. 30 ("I and the Father are one"): but such resemblance of phrase is actually enough to give some writers a basis for indiscriminate theory-building (Usener, *Rhein. Mus. Neue Folge* lv., p. 293).

(*a-polloi*)—or perhaps simply because he is one, and *not many*. (MACROBIUS.)

The Daemons[1]

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1102.

The Stoics say that there is a certain class of Daemons who have a sympathetic fellowship with men, overseers of human affairs. Those called *Heroes* are the surviving souls of good men. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1104.

That there are evil Daemons is a conclusion, not of Empedocles only, but of Plato and Xenocrates and Chrysippus. (PLUTARCH.)

Obscenities of the Popular Religion justified

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1071.

Some people denounce Chrysippus on the ground that many passages in his writings, they say, are unspeakably foul. In his treatise *Concerning the Old Philosophers of Nature* he gives a disgusting description of the picture of Hera and Zeus, saying for the space of 600 lines things which no poor obscene creature would pollute his mouth with. He expatiates at length, these people say, on this filthy topic, sorting more with the stews than with the gods, however much he may try to exalt the thing as symbolising a truth about the universe, although even those who write specially about pictures have excluded

[1] The word *daimon* had originally been synonymous with *theos*, god. After Hesiod, it came specially to be used of supernatural beings inferior to gods. It was the Jews and the Christians who first gave to its derivative *daimonion* a definitely bad sense —"demon," devil. With the Greeks a Daemon might be either good or bad.

the picture in question from their survey.[1] (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

Criticism of the Stoic Theory of Providence

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1118.

And yet it may be said that in the case of slaves and masters there is a certain reciprocity in benefits, . . . whereas to speak as if the well-being of the gods depended upon activity on the part of men would be altogether absurd. How can that be questioned? The absurdity is no less if one describes the " end and the good of the gods " as consisting in " ordering human affairs and in exercising providence " [as the Stoics do]. . . . But if the Divine Being engages in the activities proper to it for the sake of the well-being of men, and not for its own sake, it would appear to exist altogether for the sake of men. Now this is just what the Divine Being does according to those who say that " its essence consists in exercising providence." For what other account than this can be given of the Divine Being by a man who writes[2]: " What

[1] The obscene picture, Origen tells us, was in Samos (Clement says Argos), probably in the great temple of Hera. Whilst we note all that is great and lofty in Stoicism, it is important to note its unsatisfactoriness, as shown in this extract, in relation to the crude and foul elements in the popular religion, which provoked a protest, not only from Jews and, later on, from Christians, but from the better sort of Pagans. Stoicism, whilst itself maintaining a higher view of the universe, was loth to break with existing religious tradition; it could find an excuse for all the obscenity connected with popular Paganism by the easy method of explaining everything objectionable as an allegory. (Just so to-day the higher Hinduism is apt to apologise for the obscenities in Hindu temples.) This lack of effective protest incapacitated Stoicism for reform in the sphere of institutional religion, though it could produce a noble religious temper in individual souls.

[2] Von Arnim conjectures that Posidonius was the writer in question.

is left of snow, if you take away the qualities of whiteness and of cold? What of fire, if you extinguish the heat? What of honey, if you take away sweetness? What of the Soul, if you take away movement? What of God, if you take away providence? . . ." An absurd conclusion results for those who ascribe everything to Providence, and at the same time assert that Virtue is the sole good, and that this good lies within our own power. Divine Providence, according to this, is not able to provide any good thing for men, and yet they maintain that the essence of the gods consists in their providential activity. (ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS, an opponent of Stoicism.)

The Gods can cause no Evil

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1125.

And yet [Chrysippus] himself says in his book *Concerning the Judicial Function* and again in his work *Concerning the Gods*, Book II., that " It is not reasonable to suppose that the Divine Being has any share in the causation of foul things. Just as Law can have no share in the causation of illegality, and the gods no share in the causation of impiety, so it is reasonable to hold that they cannot have any share in the causation of what is foul." Yes indeed, someone may say, and he commends Euripides for saying:

> If they do foulness, then gods are no gods,

and again:

> The easiest way, to hold the gods in fault!
>
> (PLUTARCH.)

The World made for the sake of Rational Beings

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1131.

For whose sake then might one say that the world has been made? Surely for the sake of those beings which have

soul-life and exercise reason. These beings are the gods and men, than whom nothing of higher worth exists. For Reason is the thing of supreme worth. Hence it may well be believed that the world, and all which therein is, has been made for the sake of the gods and of men. In the beginning the world was made for the sake of the gods and of men, and all the things in it have been prepared and brought to light for the good of men. For the world may be described as a common home for gods and men, the City of which both are citizens. These beings, and no others, exercise reason and live by justice and law. (CICERO: words put into the mouth of a Stoic speaker.)

Animals for the sake of Men, or of Beauty

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1152.

The view of Chrysippus is pretty—that the gods made us for their own sake and for the sake of one another, whereas they made the animals for our sake—horses to go with us to war, dogs to hunt with us, panthers and bears and lions as a school of courage. The pig—this the most delicate of their favours!—was made for no other purpose than to be sacrificed; God "infused a soul into its flesh to serve as a substitute for *salt*" [i.e. in order to preserve it], a subtle contrivance to add a relish to our meals! And in order that we might have abundance of sauces and *hors d'œuvres*, He prepared all kinds of oysters and mussels and pungent molluscs and varieties of birds, getting the material for them nowhere but out of Himself, by the conversion of a great part of His substance into table-delicacies, thus outdoing wet-nurses, and cramming this our terrestrial home with pleasures and enjoyments. (PORPHYRY, an opponent of Stoicism, who, of course,

states the views of Chrysippus in a way to turn them to ridicule.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1163.

In his work *Concerning Nature*, Book V., Chrysippus writes: "Bugs are serviceable for waking us up in the morning: mice teach us to be careful where we put things. Nature too may be held to love beauty and rejoice in variety. The signal instance of this is the tail of the peacock." And he goes on to assert that the peacock exists for the sake of its tail, and not its tail for the sake of the peacock. (PLUTARCH.)

The Problem of Evil

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1169.

People who disbelieve that the world was made for the sake of God and of men and that human affairs are governed by Providence, think that they have a weighty argument when they say: "If there were such a thing as Providence, there would be no evil." . . . Against this argument Chrysippus writes in his work *Concerning Providence*, Book IV.: "There can be nothing more inept than the people who suppose that good could have existed without the existence of evil. Good and evil being antithetical, both must needs subsist in opposition, each serving, as it were, by its contrary pressure as a prop to the other. No contrary, in fact, can exist without its correlative contrary. How could there be any meaning in 'justice,' unless there were such things as wrongs? What *is* justice but the prevention of injustice? What could anyone understand by 'courage,' but for the antithesis of cowardice? Or by 'continence,' but for that of self-indulgence? What room for prudence, unless there was imprudence? Why do not such men in their

folly go on to ask that there should be such a thing as truth, and not such a thing as falsehood? The same may be said of good and evil, felicity and inconvenience, pleasure and pain. These things are tied, as Plato puts it, each to the other, by their heads: if you take away one, you take away the other." (AULUS GELLIUS.)

Vol. ii. *frags.* 1176, 1177.

He [Chrysippus] says that God punishes vice and that many of His actions are for the punishment of the wicked, whereas in his work *Concerning the Gods*, Book II., he writes: "Uncomfortable things sometimes happen to good men, not, as they happen to bad men, for the purpose of punishment, but as part of a dispensation directed to ulterior ends, as may happen in city-states." And again he writes: "Regarding evil things, we must first understand them on the lines indicated above: then we must realise that they are apportioned according to God's world-scheme (*logos*), either for punishment, or as part of a dispensation related in some way to the universe as a whole." . . .

He goes so far in ridiculing those who bring an accusation on the ground of these things that he dares to write (*Concerning the Gods*, Book III.) about Zeus, the Saviour and Begetter and the Father of Justice and Fair Order and Peace: "Just as city-states, when their population outgrows their room, discharge their surplus multitude into colonies, or enter upon wars with other states, so destructions may take place by God's initiative." . . . And he cites Euripides as a witness, and others who have said that the Trojan War was brought about by the gods in order that the burdensome multitude of men might be brought down. Mark how this man, who is always

attaching fair epithets to God, as a Lover of men, attributes to him savage and cruel deeds, worthy of a horde of Gauls! (PLUTARCH.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1178.

Furthermore, on the head that no detail of the kosmos is faulty or blameworthy, since all things are conducted according to a Nature which is the best possible, he has written a great deal, but in many places has failed to remove certain negligences connected with things by no means small and insignificant. For instance, in *Concerning Being*, Book III., after mentioning that such things [i.e. pains and discomforts] befall people of the truest virtue, he adds, "whether this be a case of minor negligences, just as in great houses you may mark particles of bran, or a grain or two of wheat, left where they have fallen on the floor, though the ordering of the house as a whole is unexceptionable, or whether inferior daemons have such matters in charge, in whose work blameworthy negligences really do occur." And he goes on to say that there is the element of Necessity, too, which comes in. What levity! To compare the sufferings of good men—Socrates condemned to death, Pythagoras burnt alive by the faction of Cylon, Zeno tortured and killed by the tyrant Demylus—to particles of bran! Or to suppose that inferior daemons are set in charge of such matters by Providence—how is that not to bring an accusation against God? (PLUTARCH.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1181.

"As comedies," he says, "often have ridiculous titles, which considered in themselves are bad, but add a certain grace to the poem as a whole, so you may rightly blame

moral evil, taken by itself, and yet it is not without its use in the general scheme of things." (PLUTARCH.)

Divination

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1192.

"If there are gods and they do not declare to men beforehand future events, either (1) they do not love men, or (2) they are themselves ignorant of the future, or (3) they do not consider that it is to man's interest to have knowledge of the future, or (4) they do not think that it sorts with their dignity to foreshow the future to men, or (5) the gods themselves have not the power to do it. But (1) it is not the case that they do not love us, being beneficent and friends of mankind; (2) they cannot be ignorant of things which they themselves have instituted and ordained; (3) it *is* to our interest to know what is going to happen, for we shall act more prudently, if we know; (4) the gods cannot think such disclosure beneath their dignity, for nothing is of higher worth than to do good; and lastly (5) divination regarding the future cannot lie outside their power. To suppose, then, that there are gods and that they do not give signs of the future, is impossible. But there are gods. Therefore they must give signs of the future. Further, if they give signs, it cannot be that they give us no means of reading those signs; for in that case they would give signs to no purpose. If they give us the means, we cannot deny the existence of divination. Therefore divination is a reality." This line of reasoning you find in Chrysippus and Diogenes [of Babylonia] and Antipater [of Tarsus]. (CICERO.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 1214.

Chrysippus made a collection of a vast number of

oracles, each amply furnished with authority and testimony. (CICERO.)

The Arrangement of the Kosmos

Vol. ii. *frag.* 527.

Chrysippus defines the kosmos as a "system composed of the heaven and the earth and the beings contained in them," or again as "a system composed of gods and men and the things which have come into being for their sake." In another sense the kosmos means God, and again in yet another sense the word "kosmos" describes the particular order which things assume when a *diakosmēsis* has taken place and is complete.[1] In this order part of the kosmos revolves round the middle, and part remains stationary. The aether revolves; the earth, with the watery substance upon it and the air, remains stationary. For the most solid part of any being is, by nature, that upon which the whole rests—the bones, for instance, in an animal. This most solid part of the universe is called "Earth." Round this the water is spread in spherical form, endowed with a more even power than the earth. For the earth has certain irregular projections which rise above the water. These are called "islands." The islands of greatest extent men call "continents," not knowing that these too are surrounded by great seas. From the water the air has been kindled, like a vaporous exhalation, and is diffused all round it spherically. From this again arises the aether, the rarest and purest of all elements. The kosmos produced by a *diakosmēsis* is distributed in this order of primary substances. The substance which revolves around it[2] by a circular

[1] Inserting καὶ ἑτέρως κόσμος after θεὸς.

[2] Note that in the narrower sense of "kosmos," it does not include the aether, which is what remains of the Divine Fire when the rest of the Fire has gone to constitute the new kosmos.

movement is the aether. In this the stars are situate, the fixed stars and the planets, being divine in their nature, endowed with soul-life and governed according to Providence. (STOBAEUS.)

The Conflagration and the Renewal

Vol. ii. *frag.* 593.

The stars are of fiery nature; for which reason they are nourished by the vapours of the earth, the sea, and the streams—those vapours which the sun draws up from the fields when they grow warm and from the waters. Nourished and renewed by these, the stars, and the aether generally, give them back in rain and then draw them up again in like manner. In this process there is scarcely any loss of volume—or a very small loss, due to a certain amount being consumed by the fire of the stars and the flaming substance of aether. From this repeated consumption of moisture, our masters hold, in the end the earth can no longer be nourished nor the air replenished, for the air can no longer arise when all the water is exhausted. The result is that the whole kosmos takes fire. Nothing but fire is thus left in existence, but fire which is alive and is God, so that from the fire in time a new world may be produced and the same order of a kosmos once more arise. (CICERO: words put into the mouth of a Stoic speaker.)

Frags. 604, 605.

In his *Concerning Providence*, Book I., Chrysippus says that God (Zeus) goes on increasing till He absorbs everything into Himself [i.e. at the Conflagration]. "Death," he writes, "being a separation of the Soul from the Body, one should not speak of the kosmos

dying. The Soul of the kosmos [the Divine Fire, God] is never separated from it, but goes on growing and growing, until it absorbs the Stuff of the world into itself."

When a Conflagration takes place, the kosmos, he says, is life, is a living being, through and through, but when it is again quenched and condensed, it turns to water and earth and solid body. He writes in his *Concerning Providence*, Book I.: "When the kosmos is of fiery quality through and through, then its Soul and Ruling Principle, by that very fact, coincides with itself. But when it has changed into watery substance and the Soul which remains in it, it changes after a manner into a duality, Soul and Body, of which it now consists, and then another rational formula (*logos*) belongs to it." (PLUTARCH.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 625.

The Stoics say that when the planets return, at certain fixed periods of time, to the same relative positions, in length and breadth, which they had at the beginning, when the kosmos was first constituted, this produces the conflagration and destruction of everything which exists. Then again the kosmos is restored anew in a precisely similar arrangement as before. The stars again move in their orbits, each performing its revolution in the former period, without any variation. Socrates and Plato and each individual man will live again, with the same friends and fellow-citizens. They will go through the same experiences and the same activities. Every city and village and field will be restored, just as it was. And this restoration of the universe takes place, not once, but over and over again—indeed to all eternity without end. Those of the gods who are not subject to destruction, having observed the course of one period, know from this everything

which is going to happen in all subsequent periods. For there will never be any new thing other than that which has been before, but everything is repeated down to the minutest detail. (NEMESIUS.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 623.

With greater truth Chrysippus in the books which he wrote *Concerning Providence*, speaking about the world-renewal, adds: "This being so, there is plainly nothing impossible in the supposition that we too, after our death, will be restored again, at the end of certain periods of time, to the figure and personality which we have to-day." [1] (LACTANTIUS.)

The Divine Life of the Kosmos

Vol. ii. *frag.* 633.

That the kosmos is a living being, rational, with soul-life and mind, Chrysippus states in his *Concerning Providence*, Book I. . . . That it has soul-life is plain from our own Soul, which is a fragment (*apospasma*) of it. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 642.

Chrysippus holds that the Ruling Principle of the kosmos is the aether at its clearest and purest, because this is the most mobile thing which exists and carries round the whole circular movement of the kosmos. (ARIUS DIDYMUS.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 681.

When we have seen this divinity of the kosmos, we must attribute the same divinity to the stars, which are

[1] "With greater truth," because the Christian Father takes these words, detached from their context, to indicate a hope analogous to the Christian idea of the Resurrection of the Body!

formed of the purest and most mobile portion of the aether, without the admixture of any other element. They are hot and luminous through and through, so that they may most rightly be said to be living beings endowed with consciousness and intelligence. (CICERO: words put into the mouth of a Stoic.)

Human Virtue

Vol. iii. *frag.* 4.

To "live according to virtue" is the same thing as to live "according to practical acquaintance with the processes of Nature," as Chrysippus says in his *Concerning Ends*, Book I. For our natures are parts of the Universal Nature. Hence, it becomes the end [of human action] so to live as to "follow Nature"—that is, to live according to our own nature and according to Universal Nature, never engaging in any activity which is forbidden by the General Law, which is the Right Reason pervading the universe, identical with God (Zeus), the head of the whole administration of the world. This is the virtue, the "smooth flow of life" which belongs to the man described as *eudaimon* [literally, "with a good *daimon*," but commonly used in Greek to mean simply "happy," "fortunate"]. In his case everything is done in harmony with the divinity (*daimon*) within each individual, to fulfil the will of Him who rules the whole world. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS).

The Bliss of the Wise

Vol. iii. *frag.* 54.

Good men are in all cases happy (*eudaimones*) and bad men unhappy (*kakodaimones*). And the happiness of good men does not differ from the happiness of the gods; there

is no slightest shadow of difference, Chrysippus says, between it and the happiness of God. The happiness of God has nothing to make it in any way more desirable or beautiful or grand than the happiness of wise men. (STOBAEUS.)

Vol. iii. *frag.* 246.

Chrysippus says that Zeus has no superiority over Dio[1] in virtue. If they are both wise, then Zeus is benefited by Dio no less than Dio by Zeus, whenever one comes across the other in activity. (PLUTARCH.)

Discarnate Souls

Vol. ii. *frag.* 815.

Chrysippus lays it down that souls, when they have left the body, become spherical in shape. (Scholion on Homer.)

Vol. ii. *frag.* 811.

Cleanthes says that all souls remain in being till the next Conflagration, but Chrysippus says the souls of the wise only. (DIOGENES LAËRTIUS.)

Divine Origin of Justice

Vol. iii. *frag.* 326.

Hear what Chrysippus says in his *Concerning the Gods*, Book III.: "It is impossible to find any other origin for justice, or any other mode of its coming into being, than its derivation from God (Zeus) and from General Nature. Such a source everything of that kind must have, if we

[1] One cannot in English render the play on names, because in the Greek the name of the chief God is in the accusative, *Dia*: "affirms *Dia* to have no superiority over *Dio*"—Dio being taken as the possible name of a wise man.

are going to say anything of worth about good and evil." (PLUTARCH.)

The Wise Man the true Priest

Vol. iii. *frags.* 604, 605, 606.

The Stoics say that the wise man is the only true priest, no bad man being one. For a priest must be expert in the laws concerning sacrifices and prayers and rites of purification and consecration of images and all matters of that kind, and he requires, moreover, to have sanctity and piety and trained knowledge of the way to serve the gods, and to know the Divine Nature *from within.* None of these things belongs to the bad man, whence all men without wisdom are impious. For impiety, being a vice, is defined as "ignorance of the way to serve the gods," and piety as "knowledge of the way to serve the gods." . . .

Furthermore, the good man is the only true diviner, since he has the knowledge which discerns signs coming from gods or daemons and bearing on the life of men. Whence all the several kinds of divination belong to him—interpretation of dreams, observation of birds, augury by sacrifice, and anything else there may be in that kind. . . .

Furthermore, good men are divine, for they have, as it were, God inside them. A bad man is a godless man. It is to be noted that the term "godless" may be used in two senses—either as simply the opposite to "divine" or as meaning one who mocks at the Divine. Not all bad men are godless in the latter sense. (STOBAEUS.)

(5) Aratus of Soli (in Cilicia)

Born about 315 B.C.; man of letters rather than philosopher, though he adopted the Stoic creed. His still extant astrological poem, the *Phaenomena*, was composed at the Macedonian court.

Praise of Zeus

Phaenomena 1–18.

With Zeus let our song begin! Him never may we men leave
Unpraised! Full of Zeus are all the streets,
All the gathering-places of men; full is the sea,
Full the harbours. In all respects we have need of Zeus, all of us,
For we are also His offspring,[1] and He, being gracious to men,
Signifieth what is favourable, and waketh up the peoples to work,
Reminding them of livelihood. He telleth it, when the clod is best
For oxen and for mattocks; He telleth it, when the seasons are favourable
Both for the planting of trees and for the strewing of seed of every kind.
For He Himself established the signs of these things in the heavens,
When He ordered the stars; and He took thought to provide for the year
Stars, which most chiefly should signify things made,

[1] These are the words quoted in the speech which St. Luke in Acts xvii. represents St. Paul making at Athens—"as certain also of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.'" It is noteworthy that words which refer to *Zeus* are here taken without hesitation as referring to *God*—a recognition on the part of the Christian writer that the Stoic Zeus was indeed a mode, if an imperfect one, of conceiving the true God.

As touching the seasons, unto men, in order that all things might grow soundly.
Wherefore Him always first and Him last they propitiate.
Greeting unto Thee, O Father, Thou most wonderful, Thou great Help of men,
Greeting unto Thee and unto the Elder Race! Greeting unto you also, Muses,
Sweet exceedingly to all, now unto me, that I may tell of the stars,
So far as it is lawful for you to answer my prayer, give guidance throughout all my song.

(6) Antipater of Tarsus

Disciple of Diogenes of Babylonia, who died between 156 and 151 B.C. He taught, like his master Diogenes, in Athens.

The Divine essentially beneficent

Vol. iii. *frag.* 33.

Antipater of Tarsus in his work *Concerning the Gods* writes, word for word, as follows: " Before entering upon our discussion as a whole, we will state in a few words what that clear apprehension which we have of God teaches us. We conceive of God then as a Living Being, blissful, imperishable, beneficent towards men. . . . Those who take away from the gods the quality of doing good, lay hold partially only of man's innate notion of the Divine. The same thing may be said of those who make the gods have a beginning and end, like other things." (Plutarch.)

(7) Boëthus of Sidon

Boëthus belongs to the middle of the second century B.C.

A Stoic questions a Dogma of the School

Vol. iii. *frag.* 7.

If everything is turned into fire at the Conflagration,

what will God do all that time? Nothing at all? That seems the natural conclusion. For now He oversees everything, and takes charge of everything, like a true father, and, to speak the truth, governs and directs the whole universe as the driver does a chariot or the steersman a ship; He watches over the sun and the moon and the other heavenly bodies, the fixed and the wandering, over the air and the other parts of the kosmos, and co-operates in everything needful for the preservation of the Whole and its faultless government according to Right Reason. But when everything has been destroyed, He will have a life unliveable by reason of idleness and a terrible want of anything to do. What idea could be more absurd? I hesitate to use words which may sound impious, but the result to God will be death, if it be complete stillness. For if you take away from soul-life the property of perpetual motion, you leave no soul at all. And God according to those who hold the contrary opinion [i.e. who believe in the Great Conflagration] is the Soul of the world. (Quoted by PHILO.)

II. EPICURUS

An Athenian by birth; born 342/1 B.C.; taught at Athens in a garden; died 270 B.C.; his writings are said to have filled three hundred rolls.

The Divine without Care for itself or for the World

The first of the FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES (*Kyriai Doxai*) of the Epicurean school.

THE Blissful and Imperishable neither for itself knows trouble nor gives trouble to anyone else, so that it is not involved in either angry passions or favours. For everything of that kind marks the weak.

Right Thought about the Gods

From the LETTER OF EPICURUS TO MENOECEUS.

The things which I continually charged you, these things both practise and meditate, holding them to be the first principles of a fair life. And first think of the god[1] as a living being, imperishable and blissful, according to the outline in our minds given by man's innate notion of the Divine, and so attach nothing to the idea of a god incompatible with his imperishableness and his blissfulness. Everything which is able to keep his imperishableness and blissfulness unimpaired—connect that with him in your thought. For gods there are—because our

[1] It would be misleading here to translate ὁ θεὸς, though in the singular, "God." The singular is merely used for the class, as when we say "The dog is a faithful animal." Epicurus believed in gods, but there is no trace of his having any belief in one god supreme over the rest, who could be entitled to be represented by the English word "God."

knowledge of them is clear and evident. Only they are not like the conception which the multitude has of them. For the common man cannot hold to the conception he has formed of the gods without inconsistencies. It is not the man who denies the gods of the multitude who is impious; it is the man who attaches to the gods the beliefs of the many. For the opinions which common men express about the gods do not represent the idea innate in humanity, but are merely false imaginings. Hence it comes that the greatest injuries which come upon men and the greatest benefits are considered to be caused by the gods. For always drawn by a kinship, it is supposed, to the virtues which they themselves possess, they show favour to good men, and regard everything of the opposite kind as alien.

The Abode of the Gods

HIPPOLYTUS (Usener, 359).

Epicurus, confessing the god to be eternal and imperishable, says that he takes no providential thought for anything. In fact there is no such thing as Providence or Destiny, but everything happens automatically. For the god dwells in what he calls the *metakosmia* [that is, the empty spaces between the worlds]. He had to find an abode for the god outside the world. There he lives in pleasure and peace and transcendent joy, knowing no trouble himself and giving none to anyone else.

LUCRETIUS iii. 14–22.

For so soon as thine argument begins to proclaim
The nature of things, springing from a mind like a god's,
The terrors of the soul melt away, the walls of the world

Fall apart, I see the great process going on through the whole of Space.
The glory of the gods comes into view, the tranquil seats
Which no winds shake and no vapours with thick rain-clouds
Besprinkle, nor any snow congealed by sharp frost
White-falling violates, but aether for ever cloudless
Covers, as in light spread largely abroad they smile.

(A kind of transcript of this passage is given in Tennyson's *Lucretius:*

> The Gods, who haunt
> The lucid interspace of world and world,
> Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
> Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
> Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
> Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
> Their sacred everlasting calm.)

CICERO, *De Divin.* ii. 40.

The gods themselves Epicurus, for jesting's sake, represented as beings pervious all through to light and air, dwelling, as it might be, "Between the Two Groves" [a place in Rome], only, in this case, it was "Between Two Worlds"—to be well out of the way of the crashes!

The Form of the Gods

CICERO, *De Nat. Deorum* i. 46.

Regarding the form of the gods we are partly given a light by nature, partly instructed by reason. For by nature we men, all the world over, have no picture of the gods except in human form. . . . But not to rest everything upon our innate notions, reason tells us the same thing. For if it would logically belong to the highest being, both as blissful and as imperishable, also to be the most beautiful, what arrangement of limbs, what conformation of lineaments, what figure, what appearance can be more beautiful

than the human? . . . If the human figure surpasses the form of all other living beings, and a god is a living being, he must necessarily have that figure which is the most beautiful of all. . . . Yet a god has not, strictly speaking, a body, but something like a body (*quasi corpus*), not blood, but something like blood (*quasi sanguinem*). (Words put into the mouth of an Epicurean.)

CICERO, *De Nat. Deorum* ii. 46.

Epicurus may make merry to any extent he likes—though not by temperament gifted with humour and in that way very unlike his Attic countrymen—saying he cannot imagine what a *spherical* god who rolls round and round would be like! (Words put into the mouth of a Stoic.)

Occupation of the Gods

PHILODEMUS (Usener, 356).

We must say that the gods use language and enjoy each other's company. "For if," Epicurus says, "we think of them as never speaking nor conversing with each other, that is not to think of them as happier and more indissoluble, but as like deaf and dumb people." . . . From the communications of virtuous beings with each other there flows an unspeakable pleasure. Yes, and we must suppose that they talk Greek or some language closely akin: it is only amongst those who use the Greek tongue that we know of the philosophical mind being attained.

How we know that there are Gods

CICERO, *De Nat. Deorum* i. 43, 44.

Epicurus alone saw that there were gods in the first place, because Nature itself had stamped an idea of them upon the minds of all men. What race or kind of men,

indeed, is there, but has a certain original apprehension (*anticipatio*) of the gods without need of teaching? That sort of apprehension Epicurus calls a *prolēpsis*. . . . The foundation, therefore, of this inquiry you can perceive to be well and truly laid. For seeing that the opinion in question is not established by any convention or custom or law, and the agreement of all men in the matter stands firm and compact, there is bound to be a recognition that gods exist, because we have an innate . . . knowledge of them. But a belief which rests upon a universal consensus of mankind must necessarily be true. We must therefore acknowledge that gods there are. (Words put into the mouth of an Epicurean.)

Scholion to the First of the *Kyriai Doxai*: Diogenes Laërtius x. 139.

In certain of his writings Epicurus says that the gods are beheld by a rational generalisation, not as distinct individuals (*kat' arithmon*), but as results produced, in virtue of similarity, by the continual flow of like images to the same place, all of them human in form.[1]

Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum* i. 49.

Epicurus, who not only saw with his mind's eye things hidden and mysterious but treated them as if they were palpable to his touch, teaches that the power and nature of the gods are such that in the first place they are perceived, not by sense but by the mind, not in consequence

[1] For the necessary corrections to be made in our MS. reading, see C. Bailey, *Epicurus* (Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 348. The use of *arithmos* to denote individual particularity is found in Aristotle. Certainly Epicurus believed that the gods *existed* as individuals, but our *notion* of them was made, he held, like a composite photograph, by a succession of films thrown off from different gods, which gave us a generic conception only of what a god was like, not a knowledge of individuals.

of any solidity which they possess, nor as individual units (*ad numerum*), like those things which on account of their solidity he calls *steremnia*, but when images have become perceptible in virtue of their similarity and continual succession, an unending succession of like images, composed of an infinite number of atoms, arising and flowing upon us, then, he says, our mind, intently fixed upon those images with a wonderful joy, comes to understand what a nature which is both blissful and imperishable must be. (Words put into the mouth of an Epicurean.)

ATTICUS, quoted by EUSEBIUS (Usener, 385).

In one way benefit comes to men, according to Epicurus, from the gods—the better effluvia streaming from them contribute, in the case of those who participate in them, to securing these persons very great good.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS (Usener, 353).

Epicurus thinks that men have drawn the idea of the god from the appearances presented in sleep. Great images, he says, human in form, coming upon them in sleep, they inferred that such gods in reality existed, of human form.

Epicurus the Deliverer

LUCRETIUS i. 62–79.

When Man's life upon earth in base dismay,
Crushed by the burden of RELIGION, lay,
Whose face, from all the regions of the sky,
Hung, glaring hate upon mortality,
First one Greek man against her dared to raise
His eyes, against her strive through all his days;
Him noise of Gods, nor lightnings, nor the roar
Of raging heaven subdued, but pricked the more

His spirit's valiance, till he longed the Gate
To burst of this low prison of man's fate.
And thus the living ardour of his mind
Conquered, and clove its way; he passed behind
The world's last flaming wall, and through the whole
Of space uncharted ranged his mind and soul.
Whence, conquering, he returned to make Man see
At last what can, what cannot, come to be;
By what Law to each Thing its power hath been
Assigned, and what deep boundary set between;
Till underfoot is tamed Religion trod,
And, by His victory, Man ascends to God.

GILBERT MURRAY (*Five Stages of Greek Religion*, pp. 134, 135).

Epicurean Worship

PHILODEMUS, *Concerning Piety* (Usener. 386).

That, he says, is the greatest thing—a thing which dominates everything else. For every wise man must have pure and undefiled beliefs about the gods and consider the Divine nature to be something great and lofty. In popular festivals, especially, he must betake himself to the contemplation of it, because everyone at such a moment has the name [of the god] upon his lips, and must hold with a more vehement passion to the imperishable nature of the gods. . . .

PHILODEMUS, *Concerning Music.*

So much may be said even now, that the Divine stands in no need of any honour; but for us, it belongs to our nature to honour the Divine being, chiefly by pious beliefs, and, in the second place, by those particular forms which are traditional in the community of each worshipper.

PHILODEMUS, *Concerning the Gods' Mode of Life.*

. . . to the gods, and admires [their] nature and disposition and tries to come near to it and yearns, as it were, to touch it and be with it, and calls wise men the friends of the gods, and the gods friends of wise men.

EPICURUS, quoted in PHILODEMUS, *Concerning Piety* (Usener, 387).

Let us at any rate offer sacrifice piously and fairly, wherever it is the proper thing to do so, and perform all other offices which the laws prescribe, but not allow ourselves to be disturbed in our own beliefs regarding those best and most exalted beings. Let us be righteous too from the belief which I stated; for in that way it is possible to live in a natural manner, equally . . . [the fragment of papyrus is here obliterated].

From a collection of sayings of EPICURUS (Usener, 388).

If the god attended to the prayers of men, the whole human race would come to a very speedy end, since men are always praying for all kinds of trouble to befall their neighbours.

Epicurus charged with Hypocrisy

PLUTARCH, *Against the Happiness of Epicurus*, 21.

He offers prayers and acts of worship hypocritically, having no need of them, from fear of the multitude, and utters sayings quite contrary to his philosophy. When he sacrifices, the priest by his side, who slays the victim, is for him no more than a butcher, and when he has performed the sacrifice, he goes away and says, in the phrase of Menander :

I sacrificed; 'twas nothing to the gods.

In this way Epicurus thinks it right for us to conform outwardly, and not act invidiously and offensively towards the multitude, to do rather the things which others find a joy in doing, though for us against the grain. . . . Epicureans think that the superstitious take part in sacrifices and religious rites out of fear, not out of pleasure; but that is precisely what they do themselves: they perform through fear the same acts which the "superstitious" perform, and that without any share in such a happy hope as the superstitious have: with the Epicureans it is all fear and trouble of mind, imposture and humbug, lest they should be exposed before the multitude. To impress the multitude their books, *Concerning the Gods*, *Concerning Piety*, have been composed, "crooked and insincere, all tricks and turns." Through fear they cloak themselves and conceal their real beliefs.

(The Epicureans might be charged with hypocrisy, so far as they conformed to the popular religion; but there is no ground to suppose that Epicurus was insincere in the view he maintained in his books of the gods as blissful beings, remote from our world, to whom men might give the worship of admiration and reverence, an aesthetic adoration of that which was ideally beautiful, without any hope of getting anything from them, or indeed of reaching their consciousness at all.

It ought perhaps to be explained that the quotations from the Epicurean, Philodemus of Gadara (last century B.C.), given above are scrappy and more or less conjectural, because the writings of Philodemus have come to us in a number of charred papyrus rolls recovered from Herculaneum, which can only partially be deciphered.)

III. THE SCHOOL OF ARISTOTLE (THE PERIPATETICS)

Theophrastus

Immediate disciple of Aristotle, born at Eresos in Lesbos, date unknown; died about 286 B.C.

Origins of Sacrifice

Passages from Theophrastus, *De Pietate*, embedded in Porphyry, *De Abstinentia* ii. 5–20, edited by Bernays, *Theophrastos Schrift über Frömmigkeit*, 1866.

It was, one must think, an incalculable number of years ago when the most cultured race of mankind, the race which inhabits that most holy country created by the Nile, first brought offerings to the heavenly gods, beginning, as the phrase is, at the beginning. And the offerings did not consist of myrrh and cassia and frankincense mingled with saffron; offerings of that kind did not come in till many generations later. Man in those days was a nomad, born to search after the necessary means of life by much travail: how should he have offered to the gods the precious tears wept by the aforesaid plants? It was not, therefore, of such things that men made offerings at the outset, but of common herbs, gathering in their hands the callow down, as it were, first produced by the generative life of nature. For the earth bare trees before she bare animals, but long before she bare trees, she produced the grass and herbs, renewed every spring; and of these culling leaves and roots, men burnt the whole of their vegetable substances, saluting by such sacrifice the gods visible in the

heavens, and establishing as eternal ordinances the honours shown these gods by fire. These are the gods in whose honour we still keep undying fire in the temples, as the thing most resembling them. . . . Then when, from the original grass, the earth went on to bear trees, men ate first of the fruit of the oak, and consumed, in sacrifice to the gods, but few indeed of the nutritious acorns, on account of the scarcity of food, but the leaves of the tree in large quantities. Later still, when human life passed to a more civilised diet, even the sacrifices of tree-fruit were discarded—in the current phrase "enough of the oak." [1] Of cereals the first to appear, after leguminous fruits, was barley, and mankind in their early sacrifices began by strewing the grains entire upon the offering. Afterwards, when they learnt how to bruise and grind the grain, they concealed in mystery, and treated as sacred, the instruments of the art, which had brought to human life a help so divine, and, the "age of ground corn" being now stamped by the common saw as happy in comparison with the preceding age, man first began to make burnt-offerings of ground barley to the gods. For this reason, even in the present day, at the conclusion of a sacrificial ceremony, we make offerings of ground barley, testifying by such action the way in which sacrifices were originally developed, though we fail to see the reason why we do what we do. In the next stage, not only barley but wheat also having now become more plentiful, we added to our sacrifices the offering of cakes and all other things: the men of that day gathered many flowers, and, no less than flowers, they mingled in their offerings every comely thing their life knew, everything which by its sweet

[1] A common Greek proverbial phrase in regard to something primitive and obsolete.

savour might seem befitting the divine senses: the flowers were wound into garlands, the fragrant things were cast as gifts into the fire. Later still when men had discovered for practical uses other liquids—wine, honey, oil—of these too they made offerings to the gods from whom all things came. . . . Then as the practice of men in regard to sacrifice departed farther and farther from the true norm, they began to resort to sacrifices of the most horrible kind, full of cruelty, so that the curses long ago pronounced on the human race might seem now to have had their fulfilment: men began to slaughter, to redden the altars with carnage, from the time when under the stress of famine and war they first tasted blood. . . .

Wherefore, it would seem, the Divine Being was wroth on these two accounts,[1] and inflicted the condign punishment. For just as there have been some men who were *deniers* of all gods, and other men of evil ways in thought, who might not unjustly be described as *vilifiers* of the gods [*kako-theoi* in contrast with the *a-theoi*]—because they conceived the gods as base, no better in nature than ourselves—so there appear to have been some men who were *non-sacrificing*, paying no dues at all from their substance to the gods, and others who were *ill-sacrificing*, setting their hand to sacrifices which were outrageous. . . .

The things we offer in sacrifice should be such that we inflict no pain in sacrificing them. A sacrifice, above all else, should bring no injury to anything. Someone may say that God has given us the animals, no less than the fruits of the earth, to use. Yet animals should not be sacrificed, because to sacrifice them is to do them an

[1] The "two" accounts seem to be explained by what follows, but some indication in the preceding passage of Theophrastus (now lost) must have made it clearer.

injury, by robbing them of their soul-life. A sacrifice is designated by its very name, *thysia*, as something pious. And no one is pious who makes presents of what belongs to others, be it fruit or be it herbs which he takes from another man against his will. How can an action be pious which involves injustice to those who are robbed? And if a man who offers stolen fruits only, offers no pious sacrifice, how much more impious the man who sacrifices something more precious than fruits, which he has taken away from others! The outrage in that way becomes greater. Soul-life is far more precious than the fruits of the earth, and to take this away from animals by sacrificing them is wrong. Perhaps someone may say that we take something away from plants too. Surely the deprivation in the two cases is not parallel. We do not take anything from plants against their will. Even if we leave them alone, they drop their fruits. And we do not destroy the plant by taking its fruits, as animals are destroyed when they breathe out their soul-life. Or, again, by taking the fruit of bees, produced as it is partly by our own labours, we do but take what is rightly enjoyed both by them and us. The bees gather the honey from the plants, and we look after the bees. . . .

To procure fruits and herbs is easier than to procure animals, and what is inexpensive and easily procured will serve for a religion more continuous and more general. Experience testifies that the gods take pleasure in such religion rather than in the religion which is costly. Otherwise the Delphic priestess would not have said once upon a time, when the Thessalian grandee brought an offering of a hundred oxen with gilt horns to Apollo, that the man of Hermione who had offered a pinch of barley-meal taken with three fingers out of his wallet

had made the more acceptable sacrifice. And when the man of Hermione, hearing this, incontinently emptied the whole contents of his wallet upon the altar, the priestess spoke again and said that by so doing he had incurred hatred from the god twice as great as the favour he had won before. Thus it is the inexpensive which the gods love, and the Divine Being looks rather to the spirit of the offerer than to the magnitude of the offering. . . .

We must then, when we go to offer sacrifice, cleanse our hearts, and bring to the gods offerings such as they love, not offerings which cost great sums. As it is, men hold that they have not the purity requisite for sacrifice, if they put on a garment of glistening white over an unwashed body; but when some people go to sacrifice with clean raiment and a clean body, but with a soul uncleansed from its evil, that, they think, is of no consequence—as if God were not chiefly pleased when the most divine thing in us is in a clean condition, the thing akin by nature to Himself! In the temple of Epidaurus it was written up:

> Pure must he be, who here would enter in:
> The pure are they whose thoughts be void of sin.

That God is not pleased with sacrifices according to their bulk, but with some quite ordinary thing, may be seen in the matter of man's daily food. However homely be the fare set before them, all men, before enjoying it, will make an offering of some minute portion of it, and this offering, minute as it is, yet has a worth of transcendent greatness. . . .

IV. THE SCEPTICS

The following arguments are probably taken from the Academic Carneades (died 129/8 B.C.), as reported by his disciple Clitomachus of Carthage (about 180 to 110 B.C.).

Arguments against Belief in a God

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *Hypotyp.* iii. (Bekker, pp. 119–122).

WE will begin with the question of the First Principles of the Universe, and since most theories agree in holding that there are causes of two kinds, material causes and active causes, we will begin by discussing the active causes. These causes are said to count for more than the material ones. Now the majority of philosophers have asserted that the supreme active cause is God. We will first, therefore, see how the matter stands with God. But there is one preliminary statement which we must make. We Sceptics follow in practice the way of the world, but without holding any opinion about it. We speak of the gods as existing and offer worship to the gods and say that they exercise providence, but in saying this we express no belief, and avoid the rashness (*propeteia*) of the dogmatisers.

Whenever something is an object of our thought, we must have a conception of its essence—for instance, whether it is corporeal or incorporeal. We must also have an idea of its form: for instance, nobody could think of a horse, if he did not know by previous acquaintance what a horse looked like. Further, the thing thought of must be thought of as existing somewhere or other. When,

therefore, some of the dogmatisers say that God is Body and others that He is incorporeal, when some say that He has a human form and others that He has not, when some say that He is in space and others that He is not, and when of those who say that He is in space, some say that He is immanent in the world and others that He is transcendent, how can we get any conception of God, finding no agreement either as to His essence or as to His form or as to the place in which He is? . . Nay, they say, call up in your mind the conception of the Imperishable, of the Blessed, and then believe that God is that. But this is too silly. If I do not know Dio, I cannot think of the attributes which belong to him as Dio; just in the same way, since we do not know the essence of God, we cannot apprehend and conceive His attributes. And apart from this, let them tell us, What is the "blessed"? Is it "that which is active virtuously and exercises providence for the system of things under it" [as the Stoics hold]? Or is it "that which is without activity, and neither itself experiences trouble nor gives trouble to anyone else" [as the Epicureans hold]? For since on this point there is a controversy which can never be decided, the notion of the "blessed" is made wholly elusive for us, and thereby the notion of God as well.

Again, in order that God may be conceived, it is necessary to direct our mind to the question whether He exists or does not exist, so far as the dogmatisers can prove. The existence of God is not, to begin with, something self-evident. For if it were obvious of itself to our minds, there would be agreement among the dogmatisers who He is, and whence He comes and where He is. The controversy incapable of settlement on these points has made God appear to us something not self-evident, some-

thing which needs to be demonstrated. He, then, who asserts that God is, must demonstrate this either by something self-evident or by something not self-evident. Now he certainly does not demonstrate it by something self-evident. For if the thing which demonstrated God to exist were itself self-evident, then, because a thing demonstrated is understood in conjunction with the thing which demonstrates it—the two being apprehended together, as we have shown—the existence of God would become itself self-evident, being apprehended together with that self-evident thing which constituted the demonstration. But the existence of God is not self-evident, for the reasons we have indicated. Therefore it is not demonstrated by something self-evident. Nor can it be demonstrated by something not self-evident. For the thing not self-evident which demonstrated the existence of God would itself need to be demonstrated, and if this were allowed to be demonstrated by something self-evident, then the existence of God too would cease to be something not immediately obvious and become self-evident. The thing therefore not self-evident which demonstrated the existence of God could not be demonstrated by something self-evident. Neither could it be demonstrated by something not self-evident. For in that way the process of demonstration would be extended to infinity, since something further would always be called for to demonstrate the thing not self-evident which was brought forward in order to demonstrate the question at issue. The existence of God cannot therefore be demonstrated by something else. But if God is neither something self-evident nor capable of being demonstrated by something else, then the existence of God is something which eludes our apprehension altogether.

Yet a further argument has to be considered. He who asserts that God exists must assert either that He controls by His Providence the things in the world or that He does not control them, and if He does exercise control, either that He controls everything or that He controls some things only. Now if His Providence controlled everything, there would be no evil and no vice in the world, whereas we are told that the whole world is full of evils. God's Providence cannot therefore be said to control everything. Supposing, next, that He controls some things only, we may ask, Why should He control these things and not others? For either (1) He both wills to, and is able to, control everything, or (2) He wills to control everything but cannot, or (3) He can control everything but does not will to do so, or (4) He neither wills nor can. But if He both wills and can, He would as a fact control everything. But He does not control everything, as has just been shown: therefore, it is not the case that He both wills and can. If, secondly, He wills but cannot, then He is weaker than the cause, whatever it may be, which prevents Him controlling the things which He does not control, but it is incompatible with the idea of God that He should be weaker than anything. If, thirdly, He can control everything but does not will to do so, we should have to regard Him as of a grudging nature. If, fourthly, He neither wills nor can, then He is impotent and grudging both, and that could be said of God only by the impious. God does not therefore control the things in the world by His Providence. But if He does not exercise providence about anything, if no work or effect at all proceeds from Him, it will be impossible for anyone to say from what he has any apprehension of God's existence, since He is neither self-evident nor apprehended by any effects He

produces. This argument therefore again leads to the conclusion that God cannot be apprehended at all. And we may add the corollary that perhaps those who affirm positively that God exists cannot avoid falling into impiety. For if they say that God controls everything, they make Him the author of evil things; if, on the other hand, they say that He controls some things only, or that He controls nothing, they are compelled to make God either grudging or impotent, and to do that is quite obviously an impiety.

V. DEIFICATION OF KINGS AND EMPERORS

The Worship of Antigonus and Demetrius at Athens, 307 B.C.

Demetrius Poliorketes, on behalf of his father Antigonus, had driven from Athens the garrison of the rival Macedonian chief, Cassander, and restored the forms of democratic government. Athens had been during the interval ruled by another Demetrius, an Athenian from Phalerum, in the interest of Cassander. The extract from Plutarch is taken from North's *Plutarch* (1579) with modifications, but not the translation of the verses from Philippides.

PLUTARCH, *Life of Demetrius* 10–12.

THUS the Athenians, through Demetrius' means, recovered the Democracy again (to wit, their popular government) fifteen years after they had lost it, and lived all the time between their loss and restitution—from the war called the Lamian War and the battle that was fought by the city of Crannon—in a state of Oligarchy, to wit, under the government of a few governors in appearance, but in truth under a Monarchy, because they were under the government of one man, Demetrius of Phalerum, that had absolute authority over them. But their preserver, Demetrius (who seemed to have obtained such honour and glory through his goodness and liberality), the Athenians made hateful and odious to all men, by reason of the over-great and unmeasurable honours which they gave him. For first of all, they called Antigonus and Demetrius *Kings*, who before that time had

always refused the name, this being, it seemed, the only part of royalty yet left to the issue of Philip and Alexander, a title which no man else had yet dared to usurp or share. Also the Athenians alone gave them the style and names of *Gods*, *Saviours*; they took away their own yearly Archon, whom they called Eponymus [because they did show the years, of old time, by the names of them that held this archonship therein], and instead thereof they ordered that there should yearly be chosen one by voices of the People, whom they should name the *Priest of the Saviours*, whose name they should write and subscribe in all public grants and covenants, to show the year. And besides all this, that they should cause their pictures to be woven in the Robe [the Peplos of Athena] in the which were set out the images of their gods. And furthermore they did consecrate the place where Demetrius first came out of his chariot, and there did set up an altar, and called it the altar of Demetrius Alighting. And unto their tribes they added two other, the Antigonid and the Demetriad. Their Council (*boulé*), which they created yearly of five hundred men, was then first of all brought into six hundred, because each tribe must needs furnish of themselves fifty councillors.

But yet the strangest act, and most new-found invention of flattery, was that of Stratocles, who put forth the decree, by the which it was ordained: that those whom the commonwealth should send unto Antigonus and Demetrius, should, instead of ambassadors, be called *Theōroi*, as much as to say, envoys sent with sacrifices to a divinity. For so were they called, whom they sent to Delphi, to Apollo Pythias, or unto Elis, to Zeus Olympius, at the common and solemn feasts of all Greece.

Yet there was another that passed Stratocles in knavery. For this man procured a decree, that as often as Demetrius came into the city of Athens, he should be received with all ceremonies and like solemnity as they did use in the feasts of Demeter and Dionysus: and further, that they should give unto him that did excel all the rest in the sumptuousness and richness of his entertainment, at such time as Demetrius made his entry into the city, so much silver out of the public treasury as should serve for a memorial dedication. And last of all they changed the name of the month Munichion and called it Demetrion: and the last day of each month which they called before "the new-and-old moon," they then called the Demetriad: and the feasts of Dionysus called heretofore Dionysia, they presently named Demetria.

But the Divine Power by divers signs and tokens showed plainly that it was offended. For the holy Robe in the which (according to the order set down) they had woven the images of Antigonus and Demetrius with the pictures of Zeus and Athena—as they carried it in procession through the Kerameikos, it was torn asunder in the midst by a tempest of wind. And furthermore, about the altars which were set up in the honour of Demetrius and Antigonus, there grew up a great deal of hemlock, the which not even in the rest of the country grew more than in a few places. On the feast day also of Dionysus, they were compelled to leave the procession for that day, it was such an extreme hard frost out of all season: and besides there fell so plentiful rime upon it, that not only their vines and fig-trees were scorched with the cold, but also the most part of the wheat-blades which were newly sprung up. And therefore the poet Philippides (an enemy of the aforesaid Stratocles) in one

of his comedies writeth certain verses against him to this effect:

> Through him, the frost our tender vines hath shent,
> Through him, the new-wrought Robe was all to-rent;
> Blasphemer! men he dared as gods to crown:
> Such things, not Comedies, pull peoples down.

Hymn to Demetrius Poliorketes, then King of Macedonia

ATHENAEUS vi. 253c. Sung during the procession to Eleusis for the celebration of the Mysteries, September, 290 B.C.

The greatest of the gods and friendliest
Are here with us,
For with Demeter cometh, timely guest,
Demetrius.
The ancient mysteries of the Maiden She
Cometh to grace,
He boon and beauteous, as a god should be,
Light-laughing face.
How grand a sight! Midmost his Friends behold
This glorious one!
Like stars in splendid ring, his Friends enfold
Him, him, their Sun.
Poseidon's child, whom Aphrodite bare,
God mighty and near!
The other gods are far away somewhere,
Or cannot hear,
Or are not, or for men have no concern:
Thy form we see,
A living god, not wood or stone, and turn,
Dear God, to Thee.
First, O Beloved, bring, we pray Thee, peace;
'Tis Thine to do:
And this new Sphinx that makes, not Thebes,
but Greece

Tremble all through,
The Aetolian in his rocky holds, like her
Of ancient song,
A scourge of lands, a body-ravisher,
For me too strong—
The Aetolian's neighbours have been still his prey
Of old, but now
Not neighbours only, nay men far away—
This fiend do Thou
School, or else find an Oedipus to take
The monster and thrust
Her headlong down her craggy hills, or break
And stamp to dust.

Inscription of Antiochus I. of Commagene

The little mountain-kingdom of Commagene, adjoining the Euphrates to the north of Syria, was in the last century B.C. ruled by kings descended from some of the great Persian barons whom the Macedonian conquest three centuries before had found established in Asia Minor. In the dissolution of the Seleucid (Macedonian) empire the Persian rulers of Commagene had gained independence, and the Seleucid king, Antiochus VIII. (125 to 96 B.C.), had given his daughter Laodice in marriage to King Mithradates of Commagene. The issue of this marriage, Antiochus I. of Commagene (whose reign extended at least from 69 to 38 B.C.), was thus of mixed Persian and Macedonian blood. No doubt the court of Commagene, like the other courts of Asia Minor and Syria at that date, had become Hellenised in externals and culture, yet something of the old Persian religion with a Persian priesthood was kept up as a matter of family pride. The inscription here given was shown by a native mountaineer to Puchstein in 1882 engraved in a lonely place on the face of a rock high up in the hills near the carved figures of Persian and Greek gods. It is remarkable for its high-flown style, no doubt the work of some Greek rhetorician attached to the court, the petty king of this out-of-the-world region being made to talk in a style more grandiloquent than we find used by any of the really great Hellenistic monarchs in their monuments. But the inscription is no less remarkable as throwing light on the mixed religion of these countries on the outskirts of the Greek world—Greek and Persian deities curiously amal-

gamated, the king both himself a divinity to be worshipped and profuse in his professions of piety towards the gods. Antiochus I. anticipates a series of successors on the throne of Commagene, stretching to eternity. The little kingdom was suppressed by the Emperor Vespasian in A.D. 72. The grandson of the last king Antiochus IV., with the name Gaius Julius Antiochus Philopappos, was a respectable citizen of Athens, where, about A.D. 115, he put up in honour of his royal ancestors, the "Philopappos Monument" the remains of which still stand on the top of the Museum Hill as a well-known landmark of modern Athens.

MICHEL, *Recueil d'Inscriptions Grecques*, No. 735.

The Great King Antiochus, God, Just, Epiphanes, Friend of the Romans, Friend of the Greeks, son of King Mithradates Kallinikos and of Queen Laodice, Brother-loving Goddess, the daughter of King Antiochus Epiphanes Philometor Kallinikos, inscribed upon consecrated bases with inviolable letters the works of His grace for all time to come, even unto eternity.

I held that of all good things possible for men the thing affording most security in its possession and most delight in its enjoyment was Religion, and the same decision of soul I believed to be the ground of prosperous power and of a happy administration, and through the whole course of My life I was seen by all men to consider piety the surest bulwark of my kingdom and a joy without parallel. On which account I came safe, as by miracle, through great perils, and achieved by successful contrivance actions outrunning hope, and was filled with many days, as one counted happy.

When I inherited the throne of my fathers, I appointed, by the religious resolution of My mind, the realm subject to My crown to be the common home of all the Gods, and I glorified the images of their forms by all manner of art, according as the ancient lore of the Persians and of the Greeks, the fortunate roots of My race, did deliver, and by sacrifices and festivals, as the ancient law is and

the general custom of men; yea, even beyond these, My just concern did devise honours of extraordinary magnificence. When I took thought to lay the foundation of this sacred fabric, impregnable to the ravages of time, in closest neighbourhood to the heavenly thrones, wherein the body of My mortality, which continued in happiness till old age, shall now, after it has sent forth My god-loving soul to the heavenly thrones of Zeus-Oromasdes,[1] sleep till immeasurable eternity, then I determined to make this place a holy seat common to all the Gods, in order that not only this heroic company of My ancestors, whom thou seest, should sit established here by My diligence, but that also the divine figures of illustrious deities, consecrated upon the holy hill, should not leave even this place destitute of witness to My religiousness.

Wherefore, as thou seest, I set here these august images of Zeus-Oromasdes, of Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes, of Artagnes-Herakles-Ares, and of My fruitful motherland, Commagene. And of the same stone I set up the express figure of My bodily Person, enthroned together with the prayer-hearing deities, and I renewed the ancient honour of the great Gods to be young like My young fortune, imitating rightly and steadfastly the immortal Providence, which had often revealed itself friendly, a manifest auxiliar presence in My arduous royal enterprises. I assigned sufficient territory and immutable revenues therefrom for sumptuous sacrifice; I chose and established an unfailing service of priests with habiliments suitable for the Persian race, and I dedicated all the ornaments and system of worship as was worthy of My fortune and the Divine Majesty. I made a fitting dispensation of eternal ceremonies, so that

[1] The Persian Ahuramazda.

together with the sacrifices prescribed by ancient and general law, all the inhabitants of My kingdom might celebrate new festivals to the glory of the gods and to Our own honour. The birthday of My mortal body, the 16th of Audnaeus, and the day of My assuming the diadem, the 10th of Loïus, I consecrated to the manifestations of the great divinities, who had been My guides for prosperous government and the authors of general good to the whole kingdom. And to increase the multitude of sacrifices and the magnitude of the festivities I consecrated in addition two days, each as an annual feast. I marked off the whole extent of the kingdom, dividing the cities and villages into several districts, so that each might meet for these assemblies and festivals and sacrifices at the nearest temple, as neighbourhood in each case might make convenient. And with regard to other seasons I commanded that always every month sacred days should be observed by the priests, named similarly to the annual festivals aforesaid, one day, the 16th, in honour of My birthday, and one day, the 10th, in honour of My assuming the diadem. And in order that these ordinances might abide for ever—seeing that it is a religious thing in men of wisdom to observe such ordinances always, not only for Our honour, but also for each man's individual hopes of happiness—I did consecrate and engrave upon inviolable tablets, by the judgment of the Gods, a Sacred Law, which it is a religious duty for all generations of men to keep inviolate, whomsoever infinite time may ordain by individual allotment to the succession in this country, knowing as they do that the sore wrath of royal Spirits is an avenger which tracks impiety, whether shown in negligence or in outrage, and that when the law of the Consecrated Dead is

dishonoured, there follows implacable punishment. For piety always brings ease in men's working, but to impiety belongs in the end grievous distress. This Law, the voice which proclaimed it was Mine, but the mind which ratified it was the Gods'.

(Here follow the detailed provisions of the Law, regulating the royal cult; the Law concludes thus:)

Whosoever shall go about to abolish or impair the holy power or the cult of the heroic Dead contained in these ordinances, which the judgment of the Immortals has ratified, or shall try fraudulently to distort their just sense, let the wrath of the Spirits and of all the Gods pursue him and his race implacably to the uttermost. A pattern of religiousness, such as piety requires us to show towards the Gods and towards ancestors, I have displayed signally to My children and My children's children, both by many other actions and by this present foundation, and I believe that they will follow the fair example, ever increasing the honours of the royal house to which they belong, and that on Me likewise they will heap many additional honours, when their own time comes, to the glory of their family. To those who act thus I pray that all Our ancestral Gods, of Persia and Macedon and Our Commagenian home, may remain propitious unto all gracious giving. And whatsoever king or dynast in the long roll of the ages shall inherit this throne, if he preserve perfectly this Law, and these Our honours, let My prayer also serve to gain him the favour of all Spirits and Gods: but let him whose heart is set on illegality, to the detriment of the honours due to Spirits, then let him, even apart from My curse, find the Gods make everything about him hostile.

Divine Honours offered to Julius Caesar

CORPUS INSCRIPT. GRAEC. No. 2369.

The People of Carthaea have set up [a statue of] the God and Imperator and Saviour of the World, Gaius Julius Caesar, son of Gaius Caesar.

Decree of Ephesus [on an aqueduct]

CORPUS INSCRIPT. GRAEC. No. 2957.

The Council and People of Ephesus and the City-states of the other Greeks domiciled in Asia and the native communities [of Asia] honour Gaius Julius Caesar, son of Gaius, High-priest and Imperator and for the second time Consul, sprung from Ares and Aphrodite, God Manifest and Universal Saviour of human society.

Decree of Provincial Synod of the Province of Asia (about 9 B.C.)

DITTENBERGER, *Orientis Graeci Inscript.* No. 458. Fragment of the letter of the proconsul to the cities of Asia.

. . . whether the natal day of the most divine Caesar [Augustus] is to be observed most for the joy of it or for the profit of it—a day which one might justly regard as equivalent to the beginning of all things, equivalent, I say, if not in reality, at any rate in the benefits it has brought, seeing that there was nothing ruinous or fallen into a miserable appearance which He has not restored. He has given another aspect to the Universe, which was only too ready to perish, had not Caesar, a blessing to the whole of mankind, been born. For which reason each individual may justly look upon this day as the beginning of his own life and physical being, because

there can be no more of the feeling that life is a burden, now that He has been born. . . .

(Part of the Decree :)

Resolved by the Greeks of the province of Asia, on the proposal of the High-priest Apollonius, the son of Menophilus, of Azani: Whereas the Providence which orders the whole of human life has shown special concern and zeal and conferred upon life its most perfect ornament, by bestowing Augustus, whom it fitted for His beneficent work among mankind by filling Him with virtue, sending Him as a Saviour, for us and for those who come after us, one who should cause wars to cease, who should set all things in fair order, and whereas Caesar, when He appeared, made the hopes of those who forecast a better future [look poor compared with the reality], in that He not only surpassed all previous benefactors, but left no chance for future ones to go beyond Him, and the glad tidings ["gospel," *euangelia*] which by His means went forth into the world took its rise in the birthday of the God; and whereas, after that Asia had passed a resolution in Smyrna [under the presidency of ?] Lucius Volcacius Tullus, Papias of . . . being Clerk . . ., conferring a wreath upon the man who should invent the greatest honours to be shown to the God, Paullus Fabius Maximus, Proconsul of the Province, . . . devised what had hitherto been unknown among the Greeks in honour of Augustus, to wit, that from His birth time should be reckoned in human affairs;

Resolved, with Good Fortune and Well-being, by the Greeks of the Province of Asia:

The first day of the month for all the Cities shall be the ninth day before the Kalends of October (23 September), which is the natal day of Augustus. . . .

From a Decree by the Greek Cities in Asia Minor

INSCRIPTIONS in the British Museum, No. 894. Found at Halicarnassus; date about 1 B.C. (?).

Whereas the eternal and immortal Nature of the Universe has granted to men the thing of greatest good for extraordinary benefits, in bringing forth Caesar Augustus, who in this our happy age is Father of his own country, the goddess Rome, and is Zeus Patroös, Saviour of mankind, whose providence has not only fulfilled the prayers of all men, but gone far beyond them, seeing that there is peace over land and sea, and the cities flourish with law and concord and prosperity, and there is a rich yield of all good, and men are filled with bright hopes for the future and joy regarding the present, etc., etc.

VI. SARAPIS

When the Greek (Macedonian) Ptolemy established himself as king in Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great, he encouraged the Greeks of Egypt to worship a deity of mixed Egyptian and Greek character, called Sarapis. The name was probably taken from that of an Egyptian god of the underworld, Usir-Hapi (Osiris-Apis), worshipped at the Temple above the sepulchres of the dead Apis-bulls, near Memphis. But the images of Sarapis represented him as a bearded Greek god resembling Zeus, and he was often called Zeus Sarapis. His great temple was the Serapeum built under the first Ptolemy at Alexandria. Sarapis became the chief god of the Alexandrines. And from Alexandria his worship, coupled with that of the Egyptian goddess Isis, spread through the Greek world, and maintained itself there through the remaining centuries of Paganism.

Letter of Zoilus, 257 B.C.

C. C. EDGAR, *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Egypte* xviii. (1919), p. 175. The actual letter on papyrus has been found in Egypt, in parts torn and undecipherable. The Apollonius to whom it is addressed was the powerful *dioiketes* (minister or vizir) of Ptolemy II.

To Apollonius greeting from Zoilus of Aspendus, of the . . ., who was recommended to you by the Friends of the King.

It happened to me, whilst I was making supplication to the god Sarapis about my health and about my prospering in the favour of King Ptolemy, that Sarapis revealed to me his will more than once in dreams, commanding me that I should cross the sea to you and make known to you this his will, to wit, that you should build him [a temple, and dedicate to him a . . .] and a precinct in the Greek town, near the harbour, and set a priest in charge,

and offer sacrifice on behalf of you and yours. And when I refused to give heed and [*some words missing*], in order that he might release me from this task, he threw me into a great sickness, so that I was in peril of death. But I prayed to him and promised that if he would make me well, I would undertake the service, and do what he commanded. And so soon as ever I was well, there came a man from Cnidus who took in hand to build a Sarapeum in this place, and had brought stones with him. But afterwards the god forbade him to build, and so he departed. Then when I came to Alexandria and shrank from speaking to you about this matter—only about the business regarding which you had made appointment with me—again I was prostrated for four months. For that reason I was not able to come to you straight away. Now therefore, Apollonius, it would be well if you carried out the commands issued by the god, so that Sarapis may be gracious to you and make you even much greater than you are with the King, and more glorious, and give you therewith bodily health. Do not be afraid of the cost, thinking that the matter will involve you in great expense: it will bring you a great balance of profit. For I shall be glad to assist in supervising all the work.

Farewell.

(On the outside of the papyrus, when folded:)

(In another hand)	(Address)
From Zoilus, about Sarapis. Year 28, Audnaeus 9, in Berenice's Haven.[1]	To Apollonius

[1] The note put on the letter by Apollonius's man of business, Apollonius being then in Berenice's Haven, a port on the Red Sea.

The Feast of the Lord Sarapis

(2nd century, A.D.)

The scrap of papyrus on which the original of this invitation was written was found at Oxyrhynchus (Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyr. Papyri* iii., p. 260.) The word for "feast" means literally "couch": those partaking of the sacred meal would be recumbent on couches, and Sarapis would be imagined present as invisible guest, probably on a couch specially prepared for him. It is not the same word as that used by St. Paul for the "table" of the Lord and the "table" of daemons (*trapeza*), though it was no doubt the kind of communion with the god which the Apostle meant by his phrase "table of daemons."

Antonius son of Ptolemy invites you to dine with him at the feast of the Lord Sarapis in the house of Claudius Sarapion on the 16th at the 9th hour [about 3 p.m.].

Praise of Sarapis

AELIUS ARISTIDES (129–189 A.D.), *Oration* viii.

Who the God is and what His nature is, it may be left to the priests and learned men of Egypt to declare and to know: we shall praise Him sufficiently at the present time, if we state how many good things and what manner of good things come from Him to men, and at the same time from these things some insight may be got into His nature. . . . What then are the works of Sarapis? The question, methinks, requires an answer beyond man's power to give. . . . For me to declare the works of the greatest of the gods, the gifts which He continually bestows upon men, would be impossible, though I acquired the mouths of all men that are, the voice of the whole of humanity, unless some of the gods vouchsafe truly to guide my utterance. . . . We must begin, as the phrase is, at the beginning. In the case of every individual man, there are three things which come into

consideration and constitute his life—soul, body, and those outside circumstances which bear on his interests. Now all the three belong to this God's province: He at the beginning brings us into the light of day, into His own kingdom; He exercises providence that all needful things may be supplied us, after we are born; He arrays our soul with wisdom . . .; He preserves our body by giving it the health without which we cannot avail ourselves of the good things of the soul or indeed enjoy any other blessing. . . . The good thing which, next to health, men seek after—the possession of money—this too Sarapis gives, without wars and fightings and dangers. . . .

Indeed He holds together for men all the framework of life and deals out each of life's constituents and in this way may be rightly thought of as embracing all things, as governing the whole of our life's course. The citizens of the great city on the confines of Egypt [Alexandria] invoke this one God by the name of Zeus—"*Dia*"—because in regard to nothing does He come short in power, but goes through (*dia*) everything and has filled the universe. The powers and honours of the other gods are separate; men call upon one god for this purpose, upon another for that purpose; He, the leader of the choir, holds the beginning and end of everything in his hand. . . . Hence, there are those who worship this God alone, in the place of all the gods; and there are others who, though for each special purpose they resort to some particular divinity, yet couple Sarapis with that divinity, as being Him to whom the whole world alike gives peculiar exaltation.

And not only does this God possess all the several powers upon earth, occupying in His single person every

province—not like any other god with a limited province assigned him, nor having received one share out of three, as in the division of the world that Homer tells of (Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto, Homer said, arranged a partition between them): no, this God is great on the sea also; merchant-ships and vessels of war are navigated under His sovereignty; great too in the aether and the clouds: whence it is argued of necessity that earth and sea alike are under his care. Homer said that earth, together with Olympus, was left as common ground to the gods; but Sarapis, whilst he stands pre-eminent as the inheritor of earth, appears besides in each of the other departments of the world as the associate of its special god. He is all unto all, single, and yet the equal of all other gods in the peculiar powers of each, fellow-worker with them in all they do, in all they furnish, at all times, in all places. He has, as the poets would say, the keys of earth and sea; [and that may well be believed,] seeing that, even after life has come to its necessary end, Sarapis remains still the Lord of men. One must pass from Him unto Him—as the phrase goes, "from home to home." He it is who assigns its place to each soul, according to the merit or demerit of its conversation upon earth, and the penal laws of the hereafter. By day He visits the regions above the earth; by night He executes the judgments upon which none living may look, He the Saviour, He the Conductor of souls, bringing to light and receiving again to Himself, round about all men everywhere in all their ways. Of no god is it truer than of Sarapis, that when a man thinks on Him, he is filled with both cheerfulness and with fear. For He is the god who has most lovingkindness to men, and the god most encompassed with terrors—creating the fear most salutary for men, in order that they may

neither inflict evil on one another nor suffer evil from one another. But He is inclined rather to the side of compassion, and what Homer said of the gods generally —that they can be turned and propitiated—is signally confirmed in His case, so manifold are His turnings for the salvation of them that pray to Him. Again, it is only in sacrifices offered to this God that men are in a special way communicants, that there is *communion* in the true sense: they invite Him to their hearth, and give Him the chief seat, as table-fellow and host, so that whilst some make contributions to this common meal and others to that, He is the general contributor to all common meals, having the office of the ruler of the feast for those who assemble themselves regularly together. Just as Homer said of Athena, that she both poured the libation and herself fulfilled the prayer, so He is both fellow with those who pour the libations and He to whom the libations are poured; He attends the revel and He invites the revellers to Himself; those who perform under His direction the dance wherein there is no fear of evil, carry home with them, together with the wreaths, blessed joy, and render Him joy in return by calling on His name.[1]

Similarly all other forms of fellowship with Him put Him on a footing of equality, unequal as we are to Him; merchants and shipmasters, for instance, not only bring Him tithes, but make Him a sharer, as man with man, take Him, so to speak, as fellow-voyager and associate in all the adventures to be traversed. So intimately does He mix with men.

[1] A word seems to have dropped out after *τὴν δευτέραν*. Keil supplies conjecturally *στροφὴν*. Professor Gilbert Murray suggests to me that, as the text stands, *τήν δευτέραν* might be taken with *ἐπικαλεσάμενοι* and *ἐπίκλησιν* understood. "They repay their joy to the god when they invoke him the second time."

He is the "dispenser of winds" in a much truer sense than the islander of whom Homer sang; it is He who has authority

> Either to still their blowing or raise them, even as he will.

It is He who has caused fresh water to spring up in the midst of the seas, who lifts up them that are down, who has made the earnestly desired light of the sun to shine forth to the beholders: the sacred depositaries of sacred books contain innumerable examples of such things. The market-places are full, and the harbours, and the broad places of the cities, with those who tell the manifold things He has done. Should I seek to narrate them, though an unending series of days ran on and on, the list of them would be left still incomplete. For His mighty works have not come to a standstill; they are more to-day than yesterday; each day, each night, adds new ones to the tale. In a continuous process it is not possible to say the proportion of what has run out; there is always more to come; thus one cannot say whether the works of the God already wrought for us are the more numerous, or the works to come; so great is their multitude. . . .

O Thou, who art Lord of a city the fairest that Thine eyes behold, which renders Thee, as is due, year by year, the great festival, O Light of all the world of men, and to me signally a Light, not many days since, when the sea rolled, billow on billow, and rose up horribly on every side, and nothing was to be seen but imminent destruction, nay almost present destruction: then didst Thou lift up Thy hand, and cause the sky which had been hidden to reappear, and didst grant us to see the land and to cast anchor there, so beyond all hope, that even after we had landed it seemed too good to be true. For these

things I return Thee abundant thanks, O Thou that art greatly to be praised, and now forsake me not, but lift me up to secure deliverance, and this hymn, composed at such a conjuncture, do Thou accept graciously, a thankoffering for past benefits, a supplication and entreaty concerning future things, that they may be better and happier than the things which now are.

VII. THE HISTORIANS

(1) Polybius

Achaean statesman, born 211/20 B.C.; brought to Rome as a hostage in 166 B.C., where he came to be on intimate terms with the most cultivated members of the Roman aristocracy. He travelled largely in the countries round the Mediterranean and wrote a history of his own times in forty books, of which a considerable part survives. He died about 128 B.C. His views were coloured by Stoicism, but in the following passage of his history, where he gives most fully his view of religion, his attitude seems essentially Machiavellian and sceptical.

Rationale of Religion

Polybius vi. 56.

The most important difference for the better which the Roman commonwealth appears to me to display is in their religious beliefs. For I conceive that what in other nations is looked upon as a reproach, I mean the scrupulous fear of the gods, is the very thing which keeps the Roman commonwealth together. To such an extraordinary height is this carried among them, both in private and public business, that nothing could exceed it. Many people might think this unaccountable; but in my opinion their object is to use it as a check upon the common people. If it were possible to form a state wholly of philosophers, such a custom would perhaps be unnecessary. But seeing that every multitude is fickle, and full of lawless desires, unreasoning anger, and violent passion, the only resource is to keep them in check by mysterious terrors and scenic effects of this sort. Wherefore, to my mind, the ancients were not acting without purpose or at

random, when they brought in among the vulgar those opinions about the gods, and the belief in the punishments in Hades: much rather do I think that men nowadays are acting rashly and foolishly in rejecting them. This is the reason why, apart from anything else, Greek statesmen, if entrusted with a single talent, though protected by ten checking-clerks, as many seals, and twice as many witnesses, yet cannot be induced to keep faith: whereas among the Romans, in their magistracies and embassies, men have the handling of a great amount of money, and yet from pure respect to their oath, keep their faith intact. And, again, in other nations it is a rare thing to find a man who keeps his hands out of the public purse, and is entirely pure in such matters: but among the Romans it is a rare thing to detect a man in the act of committing such a crime.

E. S. Shuckburgh.

(2) Diodorus of Sicily

Last century B.C. Wrote a universal history in forty books, a good part of which we still have. His view of religion in this extract seems the same as that of Polybius.

Diodorus, Book XXXIV. ii., 47.

In view of catastrophes so out of the common, one may say that even if some men are convinced that the Divine Being is quite unconcerned in any such occurrences, it is at any rate profitable for society that a superstitious dread of the gods should be engrained in the souls of the multitude. For the persons who act justly from their own virtue are rare, and the great generality of men are restrained from evil-doings by two things—judicial penalties and the visitations of God.

VIII. POSIDONIUS

Originally a citizen of the Greek city Apamea, in Syria, born about 135 B.C. He left his country as a young man and became in later life a citizen of Rhodes. For his importance as a philosopher, see the Introduction. He also wrote a history of his own times and geographical works. Both Pompey and Cicero were amongst his friends. He died about 51 B.C.

Like knows Like

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *adv. Mathem.* vii. § 93.

JUST as light, Posidonius says, explaining Plato's *Timaeus*, is apprehended by the vision, which is itself of luminous quality, just as a voice is apprehended by the hearing, which is itself of airy quality, so the Nature of the Universe ought to be apprehended by the Reason, which is akin to it.

Arguments for Belief in the Divine

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *adv. Mathem.* ix. §§ 60–87. These arguments, given by Sextus more or less in his own words, are probably derived from Posidonius.

Those who assert that there are gods, try to prove it in four ways—(1) by the general consensus of mankind, (2) by the order of the kosmos, (3) by the inconvenient consequences which follow from a denial of the gods, (4) fourthly and lastly, by a refutation of the arguments on the other side.

(1) In arguing from the general idea of mankind, they point out that practically all men, Greeks and barbarians alike, believe that such a thing as a Divine Being exists, and for this reason agree in offering sacrifice and prayers and dedicating parcels of ground to the gods, though

different peoples do these things in different ways. The belief, that is to say, that such a thing as a Divine Being exists, this all peoples have in common, only they have somewhat different conceptions of the Divine nature. But if their general conception were false, we should not see this universal agreement. Therefore gods there must be. For, speaking generally, one may say that false opinions and views arising from momentary circumstances do not last long, but disappear together with the circumstances which caused them to be maintained. For instance, men often worship living kings with sacrifice and the other forms of religious service commonly addressed to gods, but keep this cult up only during the lifetime of the kings: when the kings are dead, they abandon their former practices, regarding some of them as in truth unlawful and impious. The idea of the gods, on the contrary, has been there from the beginning of time and lasts till the end of time, the actual processes of the world, one may hold, bearing witness to it.

Or if you say that the fancies of the common man must be left out of account, and that we should be led by those who are distinguished for wisdom and special intelligence, you may take the poets. Poetry never exhibits to us any great and splendid theme but a Divine Being has attached to him the determining influence in the events described, as in the case of the poet Homer and his narrative of the war between Greeks and barbarians. But further, you have the great majority of the philosophers of nature agreeing in this matter with the poets. Pythagoras, Empedocles, the Ionian School, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics—and we may even include the philosophers of the Garden, if we go by some express sayings of Epicurus — all these retain a belief in the Divine.

Supposing there were a question about something which fell within the range of vision, we should reasonably trust those whose sight is keenest. Just in the same way, when we are inquiring about something which it belongs to reason to survey, the people whom we ought to trust are those whose intellectual and rational vision is keenest, that is to say, the philosophers.

Ah, but the fabulous accounts of torments in the other world—so those who hold the opposite opinion are here wont to rejoin—they too have in their support a general idea amongst mankind, reinforced by an agreement amongst the poets—one might say indeed that the argument from consensus applies more forcibly to the belief in Hell than to the belief in God—and yet we should never admit that the fables about Hell are true! Those who raise this objection fail to understand, firstly, that not only the fictions about Hell, but, generally speaking, every myth is marked by inner contradictions and impossibilities. For instance:

Tityos also I beheld, son of the goodly Earth,
Lying upon the ground; and he covered nine cubits.
And two vultures, sitting one on either side of him, tore his liver,
Diving deep into the caul, and he could not ward them off with his hands;
Because he had done shame to Leto, the noble concubine of Zeus.[1]

If Tityos was without soul-life, how, being without consciousness, could he be a subject for punishment? Or if he still had soul-life, how could he be described as dead? Again, when we hear:

I beheld Tantalus also, suffering grievous anguish,
Standing in a pool, and it lapped against his chin.
And he was thirsty and eager, but it was not in his power to take of the water to drink.

[1] Odyssey xi. 576 ff.

For as often as the old man stooped, desirous to drink,
The water was sucked back and fled away, so that about his feet
Black earth appeared; and the Divine Power dragged out his misery.[1]

If he never tasted food or drink, how did he go on existing, and not perish for want of sustenance? Or if you say that he was immortal, how can this be so? An immortal nature is incompatible with pains and torments; everything which suffers pain is mortal. The fact is that the myth in this way carried in itself its own refutation, but belief about the gods is of quite a different character. There we found no self-contradiction, and the belief was seen to be in accordance with the facts of the world. Indeed it is impossible to think of souls as carried downwards. For souls are of subtle make, not less fire-like or air-like than the upper regions to which they tend to rise. Also they go on existing by their own quality, and are not, as Epicurus supposed, "dissipated like smoke" when set free from the body. For on earth it was not the body which held the soul together; it was, on the contrary, the soul which kept the body from dissolution; much more then do souls secure their own continuance. When they have left the bodily tabernacle, they inhabit the region immediately under the sphere of the Moon, and here, because of the pureness of the air, they continue for a longer time, and are nourished by that which is akin to their nature, the exhalations from the earth, just as the other heavenly bodies are. In those regions they meet with nothing which could cause their dissolution. If, then, souls continue to exist, they become identical with daemons; and if daemons exist, we must say that gods too exist. The general belief in Hell has nothing in it to militate against the existence of the gods.

[1] Odyssey xi. 582 ff.

(2) Such then is the argument from the general consensus of mankind regarding God. Let us now look at the argument from the orderly arrangement of the surrounding world. The substance (*ousia*) of things, being of itself, they [the Stoics] say, without movement and without shape, must have been set in movement and fashioned by some Cause. Hence, just as, when we see a bronze of admirable workmanship, we want to know who the artist was, because matter by itself is in a condition of inertia, so when we see the matter of the Universe all in movement, all showing form and arrangement, we reasonably inquire what the Cause was which gave it movement and this rich variety of form. Now no other view seems probable than that the Cause in question is a Power of a certain kind pervading the Universe, as our soul pervades our body. This Power then is either self-moved or is moved by another Power. If it is moved by another Power, that other Power must needs be moved by a third, and so on, which is absurd. There is then a Power moved of itself and by itself, and this Power we cannot but regard as divine and eternal. For either it must have been in movement from eternity, or it must have begun to move at a particular moment of time. But it cannot have begun to move at a particular moment of time; for there can be no cause to have made it move then, and not before. The Power then which makes matter move and conducts it by an orderly process through a series of births and changes must be an eternal Power. Such a Power can only be God.

Again, that which brings into existence rational and intelligent beings must certainly itself be rational and intelligent. But the Power aforesaid is of such a kind as to produce men. Therefore it must itself be rational and

intelligent. And these qualities belong to the Divine nature. Therefore gods there must be.

Again, of material "bodies," some are single unities, some consist of a number of things joined together, some are groups whose units are not in contact. The single unities are held together by one interior principle (*hexis*) —plants and animals: those composed of things joined together are such that all the things set alongside of each other have reference to some one principle of arrangement—chains or towers or ships: those consisting of discrete units are groups, in which each unit is separate, out of immediate contact, with an individual existence of its own—an army, a flock, a chorus. Since then the kosmos is a material body, it must be of one of these three kinds. But it is not composed of units joined together or of discrete units, as we can show by the *sympathies* which characterise it. According to the growing and waning of the moon, many land animals and sea animals grow and wane, and tides in certain parts of the sea rise and fall. Similarly in conformity with the rising and setting of some of the stars, changes take place in the region surrounding the earth, all kinds of modifications of the atmosphere, sometimes for health and sometimes for pestilence. All this concurs to prove that the kosmos is a single unity. For in the case of "bodies" consisting of units joined together or of discrete units, the parts do not have this sympathetic solidarity. In an army, for instance, supposing all the individual soldiers but one perished, the pain would not be transmitted to the one survivor, but in the case of organic bodies a sympathy exists. If my finger is cut, my whole body suffers with it. The kosmos therefore is a single unified body.

But further, since of such unified bodies some are held

together by a mere principle of cohesion (*hexis*), some by a principle of natural growth (*physis*), and some by soul-life (*psyche*)—stones and logs by the first, plants by the second, and animated beings by the third—it must needs be that the kosmos is maintained by one or other of these three. By a mere principle of cohesion it cannot be held together. For things so held together are capable of no significant change or modification—logs and stones, for instance—but undergo of themselves only such change of condition as comes from relaxation or compression. But the kosmos is capable of significant changes—the surrounding region becoming cold at one moment, warm at another, dry at one moment, moist at another, something else at another, undergoing differences of quality according to the movement of the heavenly bodies. The kosmos therefore is not held together by a mere principle of cohesion. If this be ruled out, it must needs be held together by the principle of natural growth (*physis*); for even the bodies now maintained by soul-life have also, from a much earlier phase of their existence, been held together by the principle of natural growth. The kosmos must therefore necessarily be held together by this principle of growth in its perfection, since this "Nature" of the cosmos includes the natures of all things endowed with vegetable or animal life. But a Nature which includes the natures of all living things, must include those endowed with reason. And further, a Nature which includes rational natures must itself be rational: for it is impossible that the whole should be inferior to the part. If then the Nature which governs the kosmos is the most perfect nature there is, it must be endowed with mind (*nous*) and goodness and immortality. Being such, it is God. Gods therefore exist.

And if on the earth and in the sea, where the environment is relatively gross, animate beings of various kinds come into existence, endowed with the faculties proper to soul-life and consciousness, *a fortiori* in the air, which has a pureness and clarity so much surpassing earth and water, there must be living beings with soul-life and spirit. It accords with this supposition that the Dioskūroi should be described as good daemons, "saviours of goodly-timber'd barks," and it also accords, when we are told that

> Thirty thousand there be on the nourishing bosom of Earth
> Deathless warders appointed of God for the children of men.[1]

And if it is reasonable to believe that the air is inhabited by animate beings, it is surely no less reasonable to believe that a kind of animate beings live in the aether, whence men have spiritual power communicated to them, drawing for part of their supply upon those regions. And if animate beings, denizens of the aether, exist, vastly superior to the animate beings of earth, because they are imperishable and without beginning in birth, then it must be granted that gods exist, for such beings would be indistinguishable from gods. . . .

Sextus Empiricus, *adv. Mathem.* ix. §§ 123–132.

(3) Let us next look at the argument from the inconvenient consequences which follow from a denial of the Divine Being. If there are no gods, there is no such thing as piety. . . . For piety is a "knowledge of the right service of the gods," and there can be no service of beings which do not exist, hence there can be no knowledge of such service. . . . But there is such a thing as piety. Therefore we must say that gods exist. . . .

Again, since justice is introduced into the world in

[1] Hesiod, *Works and Days* 253 ff.

connexion with the ties between men and men and those between men and gods, if there are no gods, neither can justice have any existence. Which is a strange conclusion! Now the schools of Pythagoras and of Empedocles, and the majority of the Italian philosophers, maintain that not only have we men ties of fellowship with each other and with the gods, but that we have such ties with the irrational animals as well. For there is one gaseous substance (*pneuma*), they say, which pervades the whole kosmos, like a soul, and this unites us with the animals. For which reason we commit a wrong if we kill them and feed on their flesh—nay, an impiety, since we are killing our own kin. . . . Empedocles says somewhere:

When will ye cease from infamous slaughter? Can ye not see
That each other it is ye tear in the thoughtlessness of your hearts?

. . . The Pythagoreans too used to give similar admonitions. But they were in error. For from the fact that there is one gaseous substance pervading us and the animals, you cannot straightway infer that the irrational animals have rights in justice as against men. Consider, stones too and plants are pervaded by a gaseous substance, so that, by this argument, we should be united with them also. But we are not under any obligations of justice to plants and stones. We do them no wrong if we cut and saw such bodies as these. Why then do the Stoics say that men have in regard to each other and in regard to the gods ties of fellowship and obligations of justice? Not because there is a gaseous substance pervading everything—on that ground we should still have some sort of obligations of justice towards animals—but because we possess *reason*, which extends to men and gods; and in this animals have no share, and therefore

no rights in justice as against us. Thus, if the conception of justice implies ties of fellowship between men and men and between men and gods, then, if there are no gods, there can be no such thing as justice. But there is such a thing as justice. Therefore we must say that gods exist.

Yet further. If there are no gods, divination does not exist. For divination is defined as a " knowledge theoretical and explanatory of the signs given to men by the gods." There will be no such thing as possession by a god, no astrology, no prediction by dreams. But it would be a strange conclusion to deny the existence of this great multitude of things, corroborated as it is by a belief as wide as mankind. Gods therefore there are.

(The *fourth* head of the argument—the refutation of atheistical arguments—should follow, but Sextus at this point drops Posidonius for Carneades.)

The Conflict in Man's Soul

POLHENZ, p. 626. Quoted in the treatise of Galen, *About the Dogmas of Hippocrates and Plato*; see M. Pohlenz, "De Posidonii libris περὶ παθῶν," *Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*, Supplementband xxiv., 1898.

The cause of the passions—the cause, that is, of disharmony and of the unhappy life—is that men do not follow absolutely the daemon that is in them, which is akin to, and has a like nature with, the Power governing the whole kosmos, but turn aside after the lower animal principle, and let it run away with them. Those who fail to see this neither thereby set the cause of the passions in any better light, nor hold the right belief regarding happiness and concord [with self and Nature]. They do not perceive that the very first point in happiness is to be

led in nothing by the irrational, unhappy, godless element in the soul. . . .

POHLENZ, p. 620.

The germ of badness is in ourselves, and what we all need is, not so much to run away from the wicked,[1] as to follow after those who make us clean and hinder the badness from growing in us.

[1] This is an allusion to the doctrine of Chrysippus, who denied that there was in man any root of evil, and explained the fact that men actually were evil (naïvely enough) by the bad influences of society.

IX. POPULAR RELIGION

The Evil Example of Zeus

THEOCRITUS, *Idyll* viii. 57–60.

To trees winter is a dreaded evil, to streams the drought,
To birds bird-lime, to forest creatures nets,
But to a man the yearning for a soft maiden. O Father,
O Zeus,
I am not the only one to be in love; thou too art mad
after women.

TERENCE, *Eunuchus* 582 ff. The lover is telling his story.

While the bath was a-preparing, the girl sat in the room looking at a picture that was there; the subject was the story how once upon a time Zeus sent a shower of gold into Danaë's lap. I began looking at it too; and to think how he had played long ago the same game that I was playing raised my spirits to a fine pitch—to think how a god had turned himself into a man and found his stealthy way into someone else's house through the skylight to beguile a woman! And what god!

He who shaketh with his thunders all the rondure of the sky!

I, little human creature, should I not do the thing too? Be sure, I went to it with a will. (*Terence is here probably translating from the Athenian playwright, Menander,* 344–292 B.C.)

Resort to Oracles

MICHEL, *Recueil d'Inscr. Grecques*, Nos. 846–851. At Dodona little plates of lead have been unearthed, bearing a record of the questions put to the oracle of Zeus and Dione by a number of private individuals. We see Greek popular religion in working.

(Third century B.C.) "Will it be well and profitable for me, if I acquire as my own property the house in the city and the bit of land?"

(Third century B.C.) "God. Good Fortune. Antiochus asks Zeus and Dione about his own health and the health of his father and sister: to which of the gods or heroes should he offer homage, in order that things may go better?" [Answer] "Let him hasten to Hermio [= Hermes]."

(Third century B.C.) "Cleütas asks Zeus and Dione if sheep-keeping will be advantageous and profitable for him."

(Third century B.C.) "Good Fortune. Shall I be successful in mercantile adventures, if I do as seems profitable to me and carry where I think good, using my knowledge of navigation all the time?"

(Second century B.C.) "Lysanias asks Zeus Naïos and Dione, whether the child that Annyla is big with is not his."

(Second century B.C.) "Agis asks Zeus Naïos and Dione about the coverlets and the pillows which . . . has lost. Could one of the people outside have stolen . .?"

Confessions of Sin

INSCRIPTIONS from Lydia, second and third century A.D.

A

KEIL-PREMERSTEIN, *Bericht über eine zweite Reise in Lydien*, No. 208; STEINLEITNER, *Die Beichte . . . in der Antike*, p. 21.

. . . Hermogenes Valerius, son of Apolonios [*sic*], who became a guarantor for Caïcus and Tryphon in

respect of some sheep. Hermogenes was required by the court to swear that he had not abandoned the sheep of Caïcus. So being darkened in mind Hermogenes swore by the God. And the God manifested his own power and punished Hermogenes and inflicted penalties upon him, killing his cattle, an ox and an ass. And because Hermogenes was obdurate, the God killed his daughter. Then Hermogenes discharged himself of his oath. We, Amias and her children, Alexander, Attalus, Apolonios, Amion, have put up this stele and written upon it the God's deeds of power, and from henceforth we utter His praise.

B

Corp. Inscript. Graec. No. 3442.

In the month Axiottenos. Whereas Hermogenes son of Glyco and Nitōnis daughter of Philoxenus railed at Artemidorus in respect of some wine, and Artemidorus presented a tablet [on the subject to the God], the God punished Hermogenes, and Hermogenes propitiated the God, and from henceforth glorifies Him.

C

Archäolog. Zeitung xxxviii. (1880), p. 37; Steinleitner, p. 39.

Antonia daughter of Antonius to the God Apollo of Boza. I was punished by the God because I went up into the holy place in a dirty mantle. When I was well again, I made confession and put up an inscription of praise.

Artemis of Magnesia

Dittenberger, *Sylloge* (third edition), No. 557. Inscription about 207/6 B.C. There have been appearances (*epiphaneiai*) of the patron deities of the City, Apollo and Artemis Leucophryene

("of the White Brow"), concerning which the City has sent to inquire of the oracle of Apollo. The broken sentence with which the inscription now begins is the last part of the god's answer.

. . . and the Alexandrea [Games celebrated by the Ionian Confederation in honour of Alexander the Great], so that two golden wreaths should be given them [the Magnesians] by the [Ionians?]; and such honour as this, the God said, He Himself would cause to fall to them, bringing to accomplishment all the aforesaid contests and laws, according to which they should preserve the City holy. And when, after her Brother, Artemis Leucophryene, began to appear to them, the God gave this oracle to the priestess Aristo, in answer to their inquiry, namely, that if any would prosper and fare well they should do homage to Apollo Pythius and to Artemis Leucophryene and regard the City and Land of the Magnesians on the Meander as holy and inviolable.

And Artemis having appeared, they accepted the oracle in the year when Zenodotus was *stephanephoros*, and when Thrasyphon was archon at Athens [220 B.C.] . . . and first they purposed to establish games, with wreaths as prizes for the victors, open to those [Greeks] domiciled in Asia, taking this to be the meaning of the oracle, inasmuch as [those taking part in the festival] would properly honour Artemis Leucophryene if, being in general religiously minded, they brought to the Patron Goddess, when they came to the undefiled altar of the Magnesians, such gifts as were agreeable to Her, because the other contests had been instituted at the outset with money prizes, but had been changed later on to contests with wreaths for prizes, in consequence of oracles. When, however, their purpose received no encouragement [from the other Greek cities in Asia], again in the year

when Moeragores was *stephanephoros*, who was the fourteenth from Zenodotus in whose year the oracle had been given to them, they recalled to mind their ancestral ordinances and caused their devotion to be known to the people of other cities, and in the year when Moeragores son of Stephanus was *stephanephoros*, they assigned a wreath to the victor made of fifty gold pieces, to be held equivalent to the wreath given in the Pythian Games [in Greece], and their proposal was accepted by the kings [Antiochus III., Attalus I. of Pergamon, Ptolemy IV., Philopator of Egypt] and by all the other Hellenes to whom they sent embassies, each people or city-state severally accepting the project of the honour to be rendered to Artemis Leucophryene, and agreeing to regard the City and Land of the Magnesians as inviolate both on account of the recommendation of the God and of the old relations of amity and kinship subsisting between themselves and the Magnesians from the days of their fathers. . . .

Artemis of the Ephesians.

Acts of the Apostles xix. 23–41.

And about that time [53 A.D.] there arose [in Ephesus] no small stir concerning the Way [the sect of the Christians]. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered together with the workmen of like occupation, and said:

"Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no

gods, which are made with hands. And not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

And when they heard this, they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" And the city was filled with confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain also of the Asiarchs [priests and ex-priests of the official cult of the Roman Emperor] being his friends, sent unto him, and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defence unto the people. But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" And when the town clerk had quieted the multitude, he saith:

"Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is 'Temple-keeper' of the great Artemis, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore

Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause for it: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse."

And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

REVISED VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Laws regulating Ritual Purity.

Such laws show the strange mixture of genuinely moral considerations and purely material taboos in the rules of ritual purity, established for the public cults of the Greek cities.

FROM A LAW OF PERGAMON (shortly after 133 B.C.), DITTENBERGER, *Sylloge* (third edition), vol. iii. No. 982.

Further, citizens and all others shall observe purity before going into the temple of the goddess [Athene Nikephoros]. After cohabitation with his own wife a man may go in on the same day, and a woman after cohabitation with her own husband. After cohabitation, in the case of a man, with any other woman than his wife, in the case of a woman, with any other man than her husband, they shall not go in before the second day, and that after washing. Similarly, after contact with the dead or with a woman in childbirth, they shall not go in before the second day. After attending a burial or the carrying out of a corpse, if they sprinkle themselves and pass through the gate at which the vessels for purification are set, they shall be clean on the same day.

FROM A LAW OF LINDUS IN CRETE (SECOND CENTURY A.D. No. 983.

With good fortune.[1] These be the things from which they must be pure who enter auspiciously into the temple: first, and most chiefly, they must be pure and sound in hands and in mind, with no consciousness of any horrid deed; and with regard to external things, after eating beans, they may enter on the third day; after eating goat's flesh, on the third day; after eating cheese, in one day; after procuring abortion, in forty days; after contact with the dead, if the dead be of their own house, in forty days; after lawful cohabitation, on the same day, when they have first sprinkled themselves and anointed themselves with oil.

[1] The ordinary formula in Greek for introducing the text of a law.

X. PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

Philo belonged to one of the principal Jewish families in Alexandria. His life probably extended from about 20 B.C. to A.D. 40 His writings, of which we still have the main part, are the chief monument of HELLENISTIC JUDAISM. Philo was steeped in Plato and the Stoics, and modelled his writing on the Greek rhetorical tradition. Yet his religious conception of God remained essentially Hebraic, though he was un-Jewish in making the supreme apprehension of God consist in a state of mystical ecstasy. In many ways he appears to us to-day as a precursor of Neoplatonism.

God and the World

DE OPIFICIO MUNDI §§ 7–10.

SOME, admiring the kosmos more than the Maker of the kosmos, have declared the kosmos to be without beginning and eternal, and have impiously and falsely imputed to God utter inactivity, whereas they ought rather to stand in awe of His Powers, who is the Maker and Father, and not exalt the kosmos out of measure. Moses, who attained the highest summit of philosophy, and was also instructed by divine oracles concerning the most important constituents of Nature, recognised it as a necessity that there should exist in the world both an active Cause and a passive Substance, and that the active Cause was the Mind (*Nous*) of the universe, Mind the purest and most undefiled, better than virtue, better than science, better than the Good Itself and the Beautiful Itself. The passive Substance, on the other hand, is without soul-life and without the power of moving itself, yet when moved and shaped and endowed with soul-life by Mind, it changed into the most perfect possible work,

this kosmos. Those who say that the kosmos is without beginning do not see that they are cutting out the thing of greatest help and the most necessary to religion—Divine Providence. For reason tells us that the Father and Maker must take care of what He has made: a father is concerned for the preservation of his children, an artificer for the preservation of his handiwork; they ward off by every possible means everything injurious and hurtful, and seek to provide in every way what is helpful and profitable; but a thing which has not been made has no maker to care for it as his own.

§§ 17 ff.

To say or imagine that the Ideal Kosmos is in space is not lawful. Where it has its being, we shall see, if we give attention to one of the figures used in our schools. When a city is being founded by some king of high ambition, some commander who lays claim to absolute power, magnificent in his thoughts, desirous that his good fortune should have some visible adornment, it may be that one of the men of artistic culture, a master of architecture, comes forward, looks closely into the salubriousness and convenience of the site, and then begins by forming in himself a picture of practically all the parts of the city to be made—temples, gymnasiums, town-halls, market-places, harbours, docks, alleys, the arrangement of the walls, the plan of the houses and the public buildings. His soul, like wax, has had impressed upon it the figure of each several thing: he carries about a thought-city in his imagination. Next he calls into activity by the natural operation of memory each image, gives even greater distinctness to each impression, and so, like a good workman, looking at this [mental] model,

sets about making the city of wood and stone, conforming each material thing to the immaterial idea. Similarly, we must believe that when God took thought to found this great City of the world, He first conceived in thought the figures of it, and of these constituting a Thought-World, went on to fashion the sensible kosmos, using that as a pattern. Just, then, as the city imaged beforehand within the architect had no being in external space—was an impression stamped on the soul of the artificer—in the same way the City of Ideas can have no place except the Divine Reason (*Logos*) Itself, which set all these things in order.

The Mystic Contact with God

Quis Rer. Div. Haeres, §§ 69, 70.

"*Now the Lord said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will shew thee.*" (Genesis xii. 1.)

If any yearning enters into thee, O Soul, of inheriting the good things of God, thou must leave not only thy "country"—that is, the Body—and thy "kindred," sense-perception, and the "house of thy father," thy Reason, but thou must even run away from thy *Self*, go out from thy Self, inspired by a kind of prophetic afflatus, like those possessed by the Corybantic or Bacchic frenzy. For the mind in this state of frenzy, no longer in itself, but exalted and maddened by heavenly love, led along by the One Really Real, pulled upwards towards Him, while Truth goes in advance and removes impediments so that it may travel along a plain road—behold, this is the "inheritance."

LEG. ALDEG. iii. § 44.

When the Soul, through the whole range of her words and works, is spread out flat before God, filled with God, then the call of the senses ceases, all the troublesome and ill-omened voices—the voices of Sight and Hearing and Smell, and all sense-perception—they all cease; the mind goes forth from the City of the Soul and refers her doings and her thoughts to God.

XI. THE STOICS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

(1) Musonius Rufus

Gaius Musonius Rufus, a citizen of Volsinii in Etruria, was prominent as a Stoic in Roman society under Nero, and suffered banishment for his virtue. He was a pagan saint: Justin Martyr (writing about A.D. 152) reckoned him amongst those outside the Christian Church, who had followed the Logos within, though they did not know the Person in whom the Logos had become in a unique way incarnate.

Man the Image of God

Teubner edition of the fragments of Musonius by O. Hense, p. 90.

Man alone of terrestrial beings is made after the likeness of God, such that his virtues resemble the Divine ones; for not even in gods can we conceive anything higher than wisdom and righteousness, nay, one may add, than courage and temperance. Just as God then by the presence of these virtues cannot be overcome by pleasure, or overcome by covetousness, just as He rises superior to inordinate desire, to envy and jealousy, and is generous, beneficent, a lover of men—for we think of God as like that—such should we consider His image, Man, to be, when a man is in the condition which accords with his true nature, and, being such, to be what we would crave to be, and being what we would crave to be, to be happy. For the people we call happy are the people who are what we would crave to be. Further, it is nothing impossible for a man to become what we have described. For we could have no conception at all of these virtues,

unless we drew it from the nature of Man, having met with men who are really like this, and whom, because they are like this, I might call divine, similitudes of God.

(2) Cornutus

Lucius Annaeus Cornutus, another Stoic of the days of Nero, banished by Nero to an island, was the teacher of Persius and Lucan. He wrote in Greek an exposition of Greek mythology, in which he elaborated further the system of interpretation followed by Chrysippus, explaining everything as an allegory of some moral or physical truth. Of this work we still possess a rather miserable epitome, from which the following passage is taken.

Hermes

Theologiae Graeci Compendium 16.

Hermes is rational speech (*logos*), which the gods sent to us out of heaven, Man alone of all living beings that they made on the earth being endowed with reason—the thing which they themselves possessed in a transcendent degree. The name *Hermes* comes from the words *ereîn mēsasthai*, that is, "to contrive to speak"; or perhaps from the god being an *eryma* to us, as much as to say, a "bastion." To proceed, he is called, firstly, *diaktoros*, either from his being penetrating (*diatoros*) and distinct (*tranos*), or because he *conveys* (*diagei*) our thoughts to the souls of our neighbours, which would accord with tongues being sacrificed to him. He is surnamed *eriounios* because he is a great *helper*, and those who make use of him [i.e. of speech] have the highest degree of power, and he is called *sōkos*, as being the saviour (*sōtēr*) of domestic life. *Akaketa* is another of his titles, signifying something of this kind —that reasonable speech has been created not to injure (*kakoûn*) and hurt, but to save, for which reason Hermes

has had Health associated with him. His name *argeiphontēs* is equivalent to *argephantes*, and is taken from his making everything appear (*phainein*) with a *white* clarity and plainness—*argos* is an ancient word for white—or perhaps from the *swiftness* which characterises the voice, *argos* being also used in the sense of *swift*. He is the god "with the golden rod" because the stroke he administers is precious, admonitions in season being of great value and pulling up those who give heed to them. He is traditionally represented as the *herald* of the gods, and is said to carry *messages* from them to men—a herald, because he makes present to the hearing by means of vocal sound the things signified in reasonable speech; a messenger, because we come to know the will of the gods by means of the thoughts suggested to us by reasonable speech. He wears winged sandals, and flies through the air in accordance with the Homeric phrase "wingèd words." . . . The myth-makers called Hermes "Conductor of souls," bodying forth what it is his peculiar function to give, pleasurable interest and amusement[1]; one can see this by their putting in his hand a rod

> wherewith the eyes he makes
> Heavy, of whom he will, and whom he will awakes.

The eyes, that of course means, of their mind. For he [i.e. speech] has power both quickly to incite those who are slack and to tranquillise those who are precipitate. . . . Hermes, they said, had been born to Zeus of Maia, signifying again by this that reasonable speech is a product of study and inquiry, midwives (*maiai*) being so called because they bring babes to the light of day as the result

[1] The Greek term for "amuse" means literally "to lead the soul." The title of Hermes, *psychopompos*, had really, of course, reference to his conducting the souls of the dead to the other world.

of careful examination. His images [i.e. those called *hermai*] show him square in shape without hands or feet, the squareness indicating that he has some special quality of stability and sureness, in such wise that his very "*falls*" are a mode of progression,[1] whilst his having no hands or feet means that he does not need such things in order to achieve his purpose. . . . He is called *nomios*, because reasonable speech is for putting things straight, commanding the things to be done by beings who live in a community and prohibiting the things not to be done. ["Law" in Greek is *nomos*.] Owing to the similarity of sound the term was afterwards applied also to the care of flocks (*nomai*).[2] He is worshipped in the wrestling-schools, together with Herakles, to show that strength must be used in accompaniment with reason.[3]

(3) Epictetus

Epictetus, whilst still a slave in the household of Nero's freedman, Epaphroditus, embraced Stoicism and became a disciple of Musonius Rufus. He was lame, the story says, from torture inflicted by his master. In A.D. 89, having by that time obtained his freedom, he set up a school at Nicopolis in Epirus. Neither the date of his birth nor that of his death is known. His discourses were not written down by himself, but by Arrian, from notes.

The passages given are taken from Mr. P. E. Matheson's translation (Clarendon Press, 1916).

[1] The word for the *case* of a noun (*ptōsis* in Greek, *casus* in Latin) means literally a "fall."

[2] And this, of course, is what it did mean as an epithet of Hermes.

[3] This chapter of Cornutus is sometimes referred to as showing a conception of the Cosmic Reason (*Logos*) similar to that which we find in Philo of Alexandria and the Christian Fathers. Some phrases taken by themselves offer striking parallels. But it would be misleading to translate at the beginning "Hermes is the Logos." Logos all through the chapter is used of human reason as expressed in *speech*. There is nothing about the Cosmic Reason: Hermes is an allegory of language.

God's greatest Gift

DISCOURSES II. xxiii. 5.

Man, be not ungrateful, nor again forget higher things! Give thanks to God for sight and hearing, yes, and for life itself and what is conducive to life—for grain and fruit, for wine and oil; but remember that He has given you another gift superior to all these, the faculty which shall use them, test them, and calculate the value of each.

Men Kinsmen of God

DISCOURSES I. ix. 1–7.

If these statements of the philosophers are true, that God and men are akin, there is but one course open to men, to do as Socrates did: never to reply to one who asks his country "I am an Athenian," or "I am a Corinthian," but "I am a citizen of the universe." . . . When a man has learnt to understand the government of the universe, and has realised that there is nothing so great or sovereign or all-inclusive as this frame of things wherein men and God are united, and that from it come the seeds from which are sprung, not only my own father or grandfather, but all things that are begotten and that grow upon earth, and rational creatures in particular—for these alone are by nature fitted to share in the society of God, being connected with Him by the bond of reason—why should he not call himself a citizen of the universe and a son of God? Why should he fear anything that can happen to him among men? When kinship with Caesar or any other of those who are powerful in Rome is sufficient to make men live in security, above all scorn and free from every fear, shall not the fact that we have GOD as Maker and Father and Kinsman relieve us from pains and fears?

God beholds all Men

DISCOURSES I. xiv.

When someone asked him how a man may be convinced that every one of his acts is seen by God, Do you not think, he said, that all things are united together?

"I do," he said.

Again, do you think that things on earth feel the influence of things in heaven?

"I do," he said.

Whence comes it that in such perfect order at God's command, when He bids the plants to flower, they flower, when He bids them grow, they grow, when He bids them to bear fruit, they bear, when to ripen, they ripen; when again He bids them drop their fruit, they drop it, and when to let fall their leaves, they let them fall, and when He bids them gather themselves up and be still and take their rest, they are still and take their rest? Whence is it that as the moon waxes and wanes and as the sun draws near and departs afar, we behold so great a transformation and change of things on the earth? If the plants then and our own bodies are so closely bound up with the universe, and so share its affections, is it not much more so with our minds? And if our minds are so bound up with God and in such close touch with Him as being part and portion of His very being, does not God perceive their every movement as closely akin to Him? . . .

Why, the sun is able to illuminate so large a part of the universe, and to leave unilluminated only so much as the shadow which the earth makes can cover: and cannot He who has created the sun itself, and who makes it to revolve—a small part of Himself as compared with

the whole—has He not, I say, the power to perceive all things?

"But," says one, "I cannot comprehend all these things at once."

Of course no one tells you that in faculty you are equal to Zeus. Nevertheless He has set by each man his guardian-spirit (daemon)[1] to guard him, and committed each man to his daemon to watch over, aye and a daemon which sleeps not and is not to be beguiled. To what other guardian, better or more attentive, could He have committed each one of us? Therefore, when you close your doors and make darkness within, remember never to say that you are alone: you are not alone; God is within, and your daemon. What need have they of light to see what you are doing? To this God you ought to swear allegiance from the first, as soldiers swear to Caesar. . . . And what shall your oath be? Never to disobey, never to accuse, never to find fault with any of God's gifts, never to let your will rebel, when you have to do or bear what necessity demands. Can the soldier's oath be compared with ours? The soldiers swear to respect no man above Caesar, but we to respect *ourselves*[2] first of all.

Praise to God for His Gifts

Discourses I. xvi. 15–21.

If we had sense, we ought to do nothing else, in public and in private, than praise and bless God and give Him

[1] Mr. Matheson translates *daimon* by "genius," which was the word regularly used as an equivalent by the Romans. But as I have transcribed the word as "daemon" in other extracts, I substitute it here.

[2] The daemon within and the higher self are regarded as identical.

due thanks. Ought we not, as we dig and plough and eat, to sing the hymn to God? "Great is God that He gave us these instruments wherewith we shall till the earth. Great is God that He has given us hands, and power to swallow, and a belly, and power to grow without knowing it, and to draw our breath in sleep." At every moment we ought to sing these praises and above all the greatest and divinest praise, that God gave us the faculty to comprehend these gifts and to use the way of reason.

More than that: since most of you are walking in blindness, should there not be someone to discharge this duty and sing praises to God for all? What else can a lame old man as I am do but chant the praise of God? If indeed I were a nightingale, I should sing as a nightingale; if a swan, as a swan: but as I am a rational creature I must praise God. This is my task, and I do it: and I will not abandon this duty so long as it is given me; and I invite you all to join in this same song.

Witnessing for God

DISCOURSES I. xxix. 46.

In what part then do you appear now?

As a witness called by God: "Come and bear witness for me, for I count you worthy to come forward as my witness. Is anything good or evil which lies outside the range of the will? Do I harm anyone? Do I put each man's advantage elsewhere than in himself?"

What is the witness you now bear to God?

"I am in danger, O Lord, and in misfortune: no man heeds me: no man gives me anything: all blame me and speak evil of me."

Is this the witness you are going to bear, and so

dishonour the calling that He has given you, in that He honoured you thus and counted you worthy to be brought forward to bear such weighty witness?

God the Guide

DISCOURSES II. vii. 11–14.

We ought to approach God as we approach a guide, dealing with Him as we deal with our eyes, not beseeching them to show us one sort of things rather than another, but accepting the impressions of things as they are shown us. But instead of that, we tremble and get hold of the augur and appeal to him as if he were a god, and say, "Master, have pity, suffer me to come off safe." Slave! Do you not wish for what is better for you? Is anything better than what seems good to God?

God in Man

DISCOURSES II. viii. 9–14; 22, 23.

Will you not seek the true nature of the good in that, the want of which makes you refuse to predicate *good* of other things?

"What do you mean? Are not they too God's works?"

They are; but not His principal works, nor parts of the Divine. You are a principal work, *a fragment of God Himself*; you have in yourself a part of Him. Why then are you ignorant of your high birth? Why do you not know whence you have come? Will you not remember, when you eat, *who you are* that eat, and whom you are feeding, and the same in your relations with women? When you take part in society, or training, or conversation, do you not know that it is GOD you are nourishing

and training? You bear God about with you, poor wretch, and know it not! Do you think I speak of some external god of silver or gold? No, you bear Him about within you, and are unaware that you are defiling *Him* with unclean thoughts and foul actions. If an image of God were present, you would not dare to do any of the things you do. Yet when God Himself is present within you, and sees and hears all things, you are not ashamed of thinking and acting thus! O slow to understand your nature, and estranged from God! . . .

If God had committed some orphan to your care, would you have neglected him so? Yet He has entrusted *your own self* to you, and He says, "I had none other more trustworthy than you: keep this man for me such as he is born to be, modest, faithful, high-minded, undismayed, free from passion and tumult." After that, do you refuse to keep him so?

Whose Service is perfect Freedom

DISCOURSES II. xvi. 41–46.

Man, be bold at last—even to despair, as the phrase is—that you may have peace and freedom and a lofty mind. Lift up your neck at last, as one released from slavery. Have courage to look up to God and say, "Deal with me hereafter as Thou wilt: I am as one with Thee: I am Thine: I flinch from nothing, so long as Thou thinkest it good. Lead me where Thou wilt. Put on me what raiment Thou wilt. Wouldst Thou have me hold office, or eschew it, stay or fly, be poor or rich? For all this I will defend Thee before men. I will show each thing in its true nature, as it is." . . .

Cleanse your own heart, cast out from your mind, not

Procrustes and Sciron,[1] but pain, fear, desire, envy, ill-will, avarice, cowardice, passion uncontrolled. These things you cannot cast out, unless you look to God alone, on Him alone set your thoughts, and consecrate yourself to His commands.

The Hour of Death

Discourses III. v. 7–11.

For my own part I would wish death to overtake me occupied with nothing but the care of my will, trying to make it calm, unhindered, unconstrained, free. I would fain be found so employed, that I may be able to say to God, "Did I transgress Thy commands? Did I use the faculties Thou gavest me to wrong purpose? Did I use my senses or my primary notions in vain? Did I ever accuse Thee? Did I ever find fault with Thy ordinance? I fell sick, when it was Thy will: so did others, but I rebelled not. I became poor when Thou didst will it; but I rejoiced in my poverty. I held no office, because it was Thy will: I never coveted office. Didst Thou ever see me gloomy for that reason? Did I ever come before Thee but with a cheerful face, ready for any commands or orders that Thou mightest give? Now it is Thy will for me to leave the festival. I go, giving all thanks to Thee, that Thou didst deign to let me share Thy festival and see Thy works and understand Thy government."

May these be my thoughts, these my studies, writing or reading, when death comes upon me!

[1] The malefactors of whom Theseus in the story cleansed Attica.

(4) Dio Chrysostom

Dio of Prusa (surnamed Chrysostomos "with golden mouth"), born about A.D. 40, died some time after A.D. 110. Dio travelled about the Greek world as a philosophic orator. At first more of a rhetorician, he became a preacher of undoubted sincerity and fine moral earnestness. His outlook is predominantly Stoic.

The Honour of Slaves

Oration vii. §§ 132–138.

We must go on with confidence to complete our survey of the doings of men in cities. Whilst, however, we speak of some things, others we shall pass over in silence. Prostitution we must not shrink from saying a straight word about, or be shy of it as something doubtful. We say then that no one, rich or poor, ought to engage in this traffic, . . . subjecting the persons of slave women and slave boys to infamy, there in the places where citizens gather and the magistrates go by, close to the civic halls and temples, right amidst the most sacred things, compelling the persons of barbarians, and of Greeks who had once been free, to such vile service, doing a far filthier work than stablemen and ass-drivers, throwing human beings, unwilling and ashamed, before the onsets of the lustful, having no reverence for any god or man, neither for Zeus the Protector of the Family (*Genethlios*), nor for Hera the Guardian of Marriage (*Gamēlios*), nor for the Fates "that bring the due event" (*telesphoroi*), nor for Artemis the goddess of childbirth (*Lochia*), nor for Mother Rhea. . . . Let no ruler or lawgiver permit, or legislate for, profits of this kind in the cities best ordered for virtuous living—nay, not in the cities of the second grade, or the third grade, or the fourth grade, or

in any cities at all, so far as it is in their power to put a stop to such things. Or if the legislator finds himself confronted by inveterate customs—diseases that have grown a hard scale with time—let him even so not leave them altogether without treatment and correction, but search well for what is possible and in some sort mitigate and correct the evil. For it is not the way of bad things to remain stationary; they are always in movement and grow more and more abominable, if they do not meet with any firm check. The matter should be taken in hand seriously and considerately, and no tame easy-going tolerance be shown for this outrage done upon the unhonoured bodies of slaves. All men alike have been created honourable, fellows in honour, by the Author of their being; all bear the same signs and symbols of their just claim to honour; all have Reason and feel the difference between the lovely and the base.

Defence of Image-Worship

ORATION xii. 59–61. The speaker is supposed to be Pheidias, the great fifth-century sculptor, whom Dio imagines arraigned on a charge of impiety for having made an image of Zeus.

Pure spirit and thought by itself no sculptor or painter can portray. But the vessel within which the mental process goes on [the human body]—that is not a matter of shadowy conception, that is something we palpably know, and therefore to this we fly in our need. We attribute a human body to God, seeing in it the vessel of thought and reason. Unable to show the unimaginable and the unrepresentable by an example of it, we try to do so by means of the visible and the representable. We so use this that it has the virtue of a symbol. And this

is better than to make animals the similitude of God, as some of the barbarians are said to do. . . .

No one surely will maintain that it would be better if no statue or image of the gods at all had been appointed among men, and that we ought simply to look up to the heavenly bodies. Certainly every reasonable man offers adoration to the heavenly bodies, believing that he is looking at Blessed Beings from afar. But something in man drives him towards God. There is in all men an urgent craving to come to close quarters with the Divine Beings whom they honour and serve, approaching them and handling them in confident faith, sacrificing to them and crowning them. It is just like little children who have been separated from their father or mother. They have a poignant longing and desire, and often in their dreams will reach out their hands in the emptiness. Just so we men, who quite rightly love the gods because of their goodness towards us and the kinship between us and them, are eager to come, somehow or other, into contact and communion with them—so much so, that many of the barbarians, in the dearth of artistic resources, give the name of gods to mountains or stones or trees.

(5) Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (as he was called after he became emperor) was born A.D. 121, became emperor in A.D. 161, and died in A.D. 180. His little book of detached reflections "To Himself" shows a high and earnest sense of duty, with a great weariness. He clings to the Stoic creed, but with less robust faith than Epictetus. Only his determination to play his part worthily stands fast even in his sceptical moments.

The extracts here given are taken from the translation by Dr. G. H. Rendall in Macmillan's Golden Treasury Series.

The God within

iii. 5.

Let action be willing, disinterested, well-advised, ungrudging; thought modest and unpretentious. No over-talking and no overdoing. Give the god within the control of what you are—a living man, full-aged, a citizen, a Roman, an Imperator. . .

iii. 16.

Body, Soul, Mind, these three: to the body belong sensations, to the soul impulses, to the mind principles. The impressions of sense we share with cattle of the field: the pulls of impulse with brute beasts, with catamites, with Phalaris, or Nero: and mind is still the guide into the way of duty, even for the atheist, the traitor, and for those who lock the door for sin. Well then, if all else is shared, the good man's one distinction is to welcome gladly all that falls within the web of Destiny, to keep the god implanted in his breast unsoiled. . . .

Harmony with the Universe

iv. 23.

I am in harmony with all that is a part of thy harmony, great Universe. For me nothing is early and nothing late, that is in season for thee. All is fruit for me which thy seasons bear, O Nature! From thee, in thee, and unto thee are all things. "Dear City of Cecrops!" saith the poet: and wilt thou not say, "Dear City of God"?

Short Prayers

v. 7.

An Athenian prayer: "Rain, rain, dear Zeus, upon Athenian tilth and plains." We should either not pray at all, or else in this simple, noble sort.

Life with the Gods

v. 27.

Live with the gods. And he lives with the gods, who ever presents to them his soul acceptant of their dispensations, and busy about the will of God, even that *particle of Zeus* which Zeus gives to every man for his controller and governor—to wit, his mind and reason.

The Happy Life

vi. 7.

Be it your one delight and refreshment to pass from social act to social act, remembering God.

Three Hours' Prayer

vi. 23.

You have reason; unreasoning creatures and the world of material things have none: therefore in your dealings with them rise superior and free. Men have reason; therefore in your dealings with them, own the social tie. In all things call upon the gods. And trouble not over the time it occupies; three hours so spent avail.

Providence and the Man

vi. 44.

If the gods took counsel about me and what ought to befall me, doubtless they counselled well: a god of ill counsel one can scarce imagine. And what should impel them to seek my hurt? What advantage were it either to them or to the universe, which is the first object of their providence? If they took no counsel about me in particular, for the universe at all events they did, and the consequent results I am bound to welcome and acquiesce in. If indeed they take no thought for anything at all—

an impious creed—then let us have done with sacrifice and prayer and oaths, and all other observances by which we own the presence and the nearness of the gods. But if after all they take no thought for anything to do with us, then it is in my own power to take thought for myself; and what I have to consider is my own interest; and the true interest of everything is to conform to its own constitution and nature; and my nature owns reason and social obligation; socially, as Antoninus, my city and country is Rome; as a man, the world.

All Things One

vii. 9.

All things intertwine one with another in a holy bond: scarce one thing is disconnected from another. In due co-ordination they combine for one and the same order. For the world-order is one, made out of all things; and God is one, pervading all; and Being is one; and Law is one, even the common Reason of all beings possessed of mind; and Truth is one.

The Longsuffering of the Gods

vii. 70.

The Immortal Gods do not lose patience at having to bear age after age with the froward generations of men; but still show for them all manner of concern. Shall you, whose end is in a moment, lose heart? You, who are one of the froward?

God makes a Way of Return

viii. 34.

Have you ever seen a dismembered hand, or foot, or decapitated head, lying severed from the body to which

it belonged? Such does a man, so far as he can, make himself, when he refuses to accept what befalls, and isolates himself, or when he pursues self-seeking action. You are cast out from the unity of Nature, of which you are an organic part; you dismember your own self. But here is this beautiful provision, that it is in your power to re-enter the unity. No other part of the whole doth God privilege, when once severed and dismembered, to re-unite. But consider the goodness of God, with which He has honoured man. He has put it in his power never to be sundered at all from the Whole, and, if sundered, then to rejoin it once more, and coalesce, and resume his contributory place.

The Gods kind to the Evil

ix. 27.

When others censure, or resent, or make an outcry over this or that, go near and penetrate into their souls, and see what manner of men they are. You will see there is no need for straining to commend yourself to their good opinion. Yet kindliness remains a duty; love is nature's claim. And see! the gods aid them in all manner of ways, by dream and by oracle, yes even to gain the ends on which they are bent.

The Wave of Questioning

ix. 28.

Up and down, to and fro, moves the world's round from age to age. Either the World-mind imparts each individual impulse—in which case, accept the impulse it imparts—or else it gave the impulse once for all, with all its long entail of consequence. It comes to this: Either

a concourse of atoms, or an appointment of Destiny. In fine, either God works, and all is well; or, if all is random, be not you too a part of the random!

ix. 39.

Either all things spring from a single Source possessed of mind, and combine and fit together as for a single body—and in that case the part has no right to quarrel with the good of the whole—or else it is a concourse of atoms, a welter ending in dispersion. Why then perturb yourself?

Prayers

ix. 40.

The gods either have power or they have not. If they have not, why pray at all? If they have, why not pray for deliverance from the fear, or the desire, or the pain, which the thing causes, rather than for the withholding, or the giving, of the particular thing? Assuredly, if they can help men at all, this is the way of help. But perhaps you will say, "The gods have put all that in my own power." Then is it not better to exercise your power and remain free, rather than to be set on what is not in your own power, and become a slave and cringer? *And who told you that the gods do not assist us even to what is in our own power?* Begin there with your prayers and you will see. Instead of "Oh! to enjoy her caresses!" pray you against lusting after the enjoyment. Instead of "Rid me of my enemy" pray you against desire for the riddance. Instead of "Spare my little one" pray you that your fears may be at rest. Be this the direction of your prayers and watch what comes.

Personal Survival and the Divine Order

xii. 5.

How is it that the gods, who ordered all things well and lovingly, overlooked this one thing—that some men, elect in virtue, having kept close covenant with the Divine, and enjoyed intimate communion therewith by holy acts and sacred ministries, should not, when once dead, renew their being, but be utterly extinguished? If it indeed be so, be sure, had it been better otherwise, the gods would have so planned it. Were it right, it would be likewise possible; were it according to Nature, Nature would have brought it to pass. From its not being so—if as a fact it is not so—be assured it ought not so to be. Do you not see that in hazarding such questions you arraign the justice of God? Nay, we could not thus reason with the gods, but for their perfectness and justice. And from this it follows that they would never have allowed any unjust or unreasonable neglect of parts of the great order.

Ground of Belief in the Gods

xii. 28.

To those who press the question "Where have you seen the gods, whence your conviction of their existence, that you worship them as you do?" I reply: First, they are visible even to the bodily eye[1]: secondly, neither have I set eyes on my soul, and yet I do it reverence. So it is with the gods; from my continual experience of their power, I have the conviction that they exist, and hold them in respect.

[1] The reference, no doubt, is to the heavenly bodies, according to Stoicism, animate and divine.

XII. THE SECOND-CENTURY PLATONISTS

(1) Plutarch

Plutarch of Chaeronea in Central Greece, born somewhere about A.D. 48, died about A.D. 125. This lovable, generous, discursive, human and excellent man has left, beside his famous *Lives*, a considerable body of philosophic and antiquarian writing. Platonism gave the predominant colour to his thought, and he was a pronounced opponent of the Stoic materialist metaphysic.

Daemons

On the Cessation of Oracles, 10–17. A party of friends at Delphi have been discussing why the oracle has ceased, and fall upon the subject of Daemons.

"Yes; true enough," Cleombrotus replied, "but because it is no simple matter to determine how Providence is to be brought in, how far amongst things it reaches, some men deny that God is the cause of anything at all, and other men make Him the cause of absolutely everything. Both these views miss the line of reason and discretion. It has been happily said that when Plato discovered an element underlying the transitory qualities of things — what we now call 'Stuff' or 'Nature' — he relieved philosophers of many great embarrassments; but it seems to me that even greater and more numerous embarrassments were got rid of by the people who first discovered the class of daemons as intermediate between gods and men, knitting up, as it were, and binding together our fellowship in one. . . . Amongst the Greeks, Homer seems still to use the two terms 'god' and 'daemon' as equivalent; sometimes he calls the gods 'daemons.'

Hesiod is the first to set forth clearly and distinctively four classes of rational beings—first gods, then daemons, then heroes, and then finally men, and from men he apparently represents the transition as taking place, men of the Golden Race changing into a multitude of good daemons, and men of the Heroic Age into heroes. Others maintain that the change of souls is analogous to the change of material substances: just as we may see earth passing into water, water into air, and air into fire, so souls of the better sort change from men to heroes, and from heroes to daemons. From daemons a very few souls, having been purified by virtue throughout a vast period of time, go on to attain to full deity. Some souls, on the other hand, fail to govern themselves; they succumb, and again entering mortal bodies, live a life unillumined and dim, like an exhalation. . . .

"As a figure of the theory stated, Xenocrates, the disciple of Plato, adduced the system of triangles: he compared the gods to equilateral triangles, mortal men to scalene triangles, and daemons to isosceles triangles, since equilateral triangles are equal every way, and scalene triangles unequal every way, whereas isosceles triangles have two sides equal and the third unequal, just as beings of the daemon-kind combine divine powers with the passion of mortals. Nature again presents us with material parables and visible analogies, the sun and the stars standing for the gods, flashes and comets and meteors standing for mortal men (an analogy indicated by Euripides in his lines:

> Lo, this man lusty in body, like a star
> That falls, flared out, and gave his spirit to the air);

whereas we have, as a body of mixed substance, the moon, a true figure of the daemons, inasmuch as it corre-

sponds with the revolution of daemonic beings, being capable of waning and waxing and change, obvious to the eyes. Some men, seeing this, have described the moon as an 'earthy star,' others as a 'heavenly earth,' others again have made it the special portion of Hekate, a power both of the underworld and of heaven. Just as if, therefore, supposing someone were to eliminate and draw away all the air between the earth and the moon, an empty unconnected space would come to exist in the interval, and so the unity and fellowship of the universe be destroyed, just in the same way, those who refuse to acknowledge the daemon-kind, do away with the possibility of intercourse and communication between gods and men, abolishing, as Plato said, the beings whose office it is to act as interpreters and ministers. They must either do this, or they must compel us to mix things up in hopeless confusion by plunging God Himself into the turmoil of human passions and human concerns, dragging Him down to serve our needs, as Thessalian witches are said to draw down the moon. . . .

"As amongst men, so amongst daemons there are differences in moral character. In some daemons there is merely a last vestige left, feeble and faint, of passion and unreason; in others these things are still strong and hard to quell, of which fact you may find many scattered traces and indications preserved in particular sacrifices and mysteries and mythical stories.

"With regard to mysteries, in which you may have the clearest and most impressive declaration of the truth concerning the daemons, 'may my tongue not offend,' as Hesiod says: but as regards festivals and sacrifices, days of ill-omen and days of gloom, marked by the eating of raw flesh, tearing of the victims piecemeal, fasting,

lamentation, or, again, in many cases, by the utterance of obscenities before the temples,

> Frenzy and yelling and tossing of hair in the loud wild rout of the worshippers,

such things I should not allow to be addressed to any of the gods, but to be rites of soothing and propitiation designed to turn away the malice of bad daemons. The human sacrifices once practised it is incredible that gods can ever have demanded or ever have been pleased with, nor, on the other hand, would kings and captains ever have agreed to them without any reason at all, offering their own children as victims to be slain; it must have been, therefore, that they were averting or gratifying the anger and wrath of cruel and persistent evil spirits; or in some cases gratifying their furious and tyrannical lusts, incapable or undesirous as they might be of carnal intercourse. . . .

"Yet further, all that old stories tell, all that is sung in hymns, of gods carrying off maidens, of their wanderings and occultations, of their being sent into banishment or compelled to do service, we must understand as the sufferings and adventures, not of gods, but of daemons, still kept in the memory of men because of their virtue or their power, so that Aeschylus had no right to say:

> Holy Apollo, god in banishment,

nor Sophocles to make Admetus say:

> My cock at dawn would call him to the mill.

But none stray so far from the truth as the rehearsers of the sacred stories [the *theologoi*] at Delphi, who believe that once upon a time in this spot the god had a fight with a serpent about the oracular shrine, and allow poets and myth-writers to turn these stories into plays in the

theatres, as if they actually wanted to give the lie direct to the witness of their own most holy rites. . . ."

When Cleombrotus had ended, Heracleon spoke. "We have no one here amongst us," he said, "who is profane and uninitiated, or who holds opinions about the gods repugnant to us; but let us keep a guard on ourselves, Philip, lest we, ere we are aware, may let our conversation slide into wild suppositions, raising very big questions."

"I agree," Philip answered, "but what is it particularly in Cleombrotus's statement that offends you?"

"So far as his contention goes," Heracleon answered, "that the powers governing oracular shrines are not gods, whom it is fitting to relieve of terrestrial concerns, but daemons, ministers of the gods, that seems to me not unreasonable; but when people go on to take by the handful, if I may say so, out of the poem of Empedocles the sins and dooms and penal wanderings there spoken of, and attach them to these daemons, when they end by supposing that they even suffer death like men, that I consider overbold, a notion almost barbarian."

Cleombrotus asked Philip who the young man was, and where he came from, and when he had been told his name and his city, he said:

"I am fully conscious myself, Heracleon, that I have been traversing strange ground in what I said; but when one grapples with large problems, one cannot make any advance towards probability in one's beliefs, unless one brings to bear large presuppositions. But you yourself do not see that you take back the very thing you grant. You agree that daemons exist, but when you claim that they can never be morally inferior or suffer death, you make them in effect daemons no longer. For in what

respect would they then differ from gods—if, that is to say, immortality is a characteristic of their being, and their moral character excludes passion and sin?"

Heracleon made no answer but remained wrestling with some thought, and Cleombrotus went on:

"Remember, Heracleon, it is not Empedocles only who laid down the existence of bad daemons; Plato did so too, and Xenocrates, and Chrysippus. Yes, and Democritus as well, when he prayed that there might come to him only 'auspicious phantoms,' clearly recognised that there were others of sinister character, with evil wills and impulses. And as regards the death of such beings, I have heard a story told by a man who was no fool or charlatan.

"Aemilianus the professor of rhetoric, to whom some of you have listened in your time, was the son of a certain Epitherses, a citizen of my own city and a teacher of literature. This man told how once, when he made a voyage to Italy, he embarked on a ship which carried a quantity of merchandise and numerous passengers. At the fall of evening, when they had got as far as the Echinades, the wind dropped, and the ship was carried aside from her course till she came close to Paxos. Most of those on board were still awake: many were still drinking after supper. Suddenly a voice was heard from the island of Paxos—the voice of someone shouting for Thamous, a thing unexpected and mysterious. Thamous, you must understand, was a steersman, an Egyptian. To many on board he was quite unknown, even by name. Twice the voice called Thamous, and he made no reply. When it called him the third time, he answered. Then the voice, raised to a more thrilling pitch, said, 'When you come over against the Palodes, give the

message that great Pan is dead.' All those who heard these words, Epitherses said, were lost in amazement. There was a general discussion, whether it would be best to comply with the injunction, or go on quietly and pay no attention to it. At last Thamous gave the following decision: Supposing, when they reached the spot, they had a good wind, they would sail past and do nothing about it; supposing, on the other hand, they found themselves becalmed, they would announce what they had heard. When they came over against the Palodes, there was a dead calm without a wave. So Thamous, looking towards the land from the stern, gave the message: 'Great Pan is dead.' He had hardly uttered the words, when there arose a great sound of lament, mingled with dismay, not, it seemed, from one mouth, but from a multitude. And since the thing was witnessed by the whole company of those on board, the story soon got abroad in Rome, and Thamous was sent for by Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius attached so much credit to the story that he instituted inquiries regarding Pan. The learned men, of whom he had a great number about him, opined that the Pan meant must be the son of Hermes and Penelope."

This story Philip confirmed by adducing some of those present as witnesses, who had heard Aemilianus tell it in his old age.

Theory of Oracular Inspiration

On the Oracles of the Delphic Prophetess 5–7; 21, 22. A company of persons is being shown over the Temple at Delphi.

. . . Silence followed for the time; then the guides resumed, and they had all their discourses ready on their tongue. On some oracle in verse being recited—relating, I think, to the kingdom of Aegon the Argive—

Diogenianus observed that he had often wondered why the verses in which the oracles were delivered were such bad ones. "The god," he said, "is Leader of the Muses, and he ought surely to be a master of literary style, no less than of music and song, and surpass Hesiod and Homer in the beauty of his phrasing, whereas we see most oracles to be full of anomalies and faults in their metre and in their diction."

"What!" exclaimed Sarapion the poet, who had joined our party from Athens, "we believe these verses to be the god's, and yet we dare to say that they are less beautiful than the verses of Homer and Hesiod! We ought rather to take these verses as our standard of merit and beauty, and correct our own judgment by them, vitiated as it is by false convention!"

Here Boëthus the geometrician threw in (you know he has already gone over to the Epicureans) . . . "That the verses of the oracle are not good verses, is plain enough surely, my dear Sarapion, by your own judgment. When you write poems, your matter indeed is philosophic and severe, but in effectiveness and grace and literary craftsmanship your verses are much more like those of Homer and Hesiod than they are like those pronounced by the Pythian prophetess."

(In answer Sarapion lets fly against the debased taste of the age, which prefers the melodious and voluptuous to the plain and austere.)

When Sarapion had ended, Theon said with a smile: "Sarapion has followed his usual bent and grasped the occasion given him by our talk incidentally touching on the subject of Ate and of pleasure; but we, Boëthus, granting that these verses are poorer than those of Homer, must not suppose that they were composed by the god.

The god only gives the initial impulse from which the inner movement starts, in accordance with the individual temperament of each prophetess. Supposing the oracles were delivered in writing, not in spoken utterance, we should not, I take it, imagine the characters to be formed by the god, and censure him if they fell short of the calligraphy of royal scribes. The voice, the pronunciation, the phrasing, the metre—none of these things is the god's, but the woman's: the god merely presents the images to the mind and makes light in the soul regarding the future. This is the kind of thing that 'enthusiasm,' possession by the god, actually is. . . .

"It would be worth while some other time to go more fully into these things, but for the moment let us learn the truth of the matter in brief and bear it in mind: the body uses many instruments, but the soul uses the body itself and the several parts of the body. And the soul has been made the instrument of God. Now the goodness of an instrument consists above all in its reproducing the character of the person using it, according to the special ability given it by its own nature, in its exhibiting in itself the effect of his thought, showing this not as it is in the Maker Himself, pure and passionless and infallible, but adulterated with a large alien element. For His thought in itself is beyond our ken, and when one thing is manifested through another thing, it is contaminated with the nature of the medium. I will say nothing of wax, gold, silver, bronze, and all the other substances of plastic quality, which though they all receive the impression of one and the same type, yet in the reproduction of it add each some property of their own, nor of the innumerably various images and apparitions in mirrors, flat, concave, and convex, all reflexions of one and the

same object. There is nothing, again, more similar in appearance to the sun than the moon, nothing which by its nature affords the sun a more yielding instrument; and yet the moon, when it receives the sun's radiance and fire, does not transmit them to us unaltered, but mixed with itself, exhibiting a different colour, a different power: the heat has disappeared altogether, and in its feebleness has left the luminosity there alone. I expect you know the saying of Heraclitus: 'The King to whom the oracular seat at Delphi belongs neither speaks out nor conceals, but gives a sign.' That was well said; and now go on and think of the god here as using the prophetess for a message to the ears, just as the sun uses the moon for a message to the eyes. He shows and reveals indeed his own thoughts, but he shows them with an admixture, through a mortal body and a soul unable to maintain absolute tranquillity and yield herself to the Mover without any motion of her own, quite still—a soul filled with noises like a bark in a surging sea, never free from movements which go on within her, from passions which agitate her. For as the rotatory impetus cannot securely dominate bodies which, while whirled in a circle, are at the same time affected by gravity—constrained as they are by an extraneous force to gyrate and impelled downwards by their own nature, a kind of irregular uneven spiral movement results—so the state called 'enthusiasm' seems to be a composition of two movements, the movement communicated to the soul from without and the movement proper to the soul's own nature. When it is not possible to employ even inanimate bodies, which have no movement of their own, in a way which violates their nature, to give to a cylinder, for instance, the movement of a ball or of a cube, to use

a lyre as a flute, or a trumpet as a lute—when, in fact, to use these things as an artist uses them means just to use them in accordance with their special natures—how could it ever be possible to employ that which is animate and self-moving, endowed with volition and reason, in any way which does not correspond with its own inherent condition or potentiality or nature, to move musically a mind with no sense of music, an unlettered mind like the mind of a grammarian, a mind destitute of the lights and training of scholarship like the mind of a scholar?

"I may call Homer as a witness. No single thing, one might almost say, is, according to Homer's view, brought to accomplishment 'without the god'; yet he does not represent the deity as using any person for any purpose indiscriminately, but each person in correspondence with his particular craft or faculty. Don't you see, my dear Diogenianus, how Athena, when she wants the Achaeans talked over, calls on Odysseus; when she wants the truce broken, seeks for Pandarus; when she wants the Trojans routed, has recourse to Diomed? Diomed is a stalwart fierce fighter; Pandarus is an expert bowman; Odysseus is an able speaker and a sagacious man. Homer's thought indeed is very different from Pindar's, if Pindar really was author of the line:

If God so will, a basket serves for sailing.

Homer recognised that different faculties and natures are meant for different purposes, and that each of them is moved in a diverse way, even if the thing which moves them all is one and the same. Just, then, as you cannot make a wingless creature move with the motion of flight, nor a lisping person speak distinctly, nor a stammerer speak gracefully—for this very reason, I think, Battus when he came to consult the god about his voice

was sent off to found a colony in Libya, because he was a man whose utterance was lisping and stammering, but who was admirably adapted for the work of a king and statesman and practical administrator—so it is impossible for someone without literary education and with no trained ear for verse to discourse in poetry. Take the woman who at the present moment serves the god; none of the prophetesses here has been bred more legitimately and honourably and lived a more decent, orderly life; yet brought up as she was in the house of poor tillers of the soil, and bringing with her no special education, no acquirement or skill, when she descends into the oracular chamber—reminding one indeed of what Xenophon says about a young bride, that the less she has seen and the less she has heard before she goes to her husband's house the better—this woman, untaught and ignorant, one might almost say, of everything, comes to her commerce with the god, a virgin indeed, a virgin in soul. Ah! we think that the cries of herons and sandpipers and ravens are used by the god to convey signs, and we do not expect them, as messengers and heralds of the gods, to declare things in reasonable articulate speech, and shall we require the utterance and diction of the Pythian prophetess to be like that of a tragic actor—not unadorned and plain, but dressed in metre and majesty and artifice and fine figures of speech, with a flute accompaniment!"

God and the Survival of the Soul

On God's Slowness in Punishing (*De Sera Numinis Vindicta*) 17.

I had scarce finished speaking, when Olympichus caught me up with the words: "You make a very large

postulate in all you say—the permanence of the soul." "A postulate," I replied, "which you yourselves grant —or rather have already granted. That God gives to each of us according to his due was the presupposition on which our argument has from the very outset proceeded."

"In your view then," Olympichus said, "from the fact that the gods oversee and direct all our concerns it follows that souls are either absolutely immortal or at any rate continue in existence for a certain time after death?"

"Why not say at once, my friend," I answered, "that God is so petty, so concerned about trifles, that although we have nothing in us divine or in any way after His likeness, nothing durable and firm, though, as Homer said, we wither away altogether, like leaves, and perish in a day, yet God takes so great account of us—like the women who cherish and tend 'gardens of Adonis' on potsherds—these poor little transitory souls of ours growing in a flesh so frail, where they can strike no strong roots of life, then in a moment snuffed out by any chance occasion! Or if you will, let us leave the other gods out of account, and consider only this god of ours here [the Delphic Apollo]. Though he knows perfectly well, you think, that the souls of those who die perish instantly, evaporating from the bodies like a mist or a smoke, yet he puts forward many modes of propitiating the departed and demands great prerogatives and honours for the dead, deceiving and befooling those who believe? I for my part will never let go the survival of the soul, till someone steals and carries off the tripod of the prophetess, like Herakles, and destroys this whole oracular shrine! . . ."

A Dualistic View

CONCERNING ISIS AND OSIRIS, 45–48. Plutarch has given various allegorical interpretations which explain Typhon, the adversary of Osiris, as standing for different kinds of destructive force in nature.

Whence it would not be wide of the mark to say that none of the views put forward, taken by itself, is right, but that they are right taken all together. Typhon is not either drought, or a wind, or the sea, or darkness, but every injurious and destructive thing in nature is a part of Typhon. It is an error to find the origin of the universe in particles of lifeless matter, like Democritus and Epicurus, or in one Reasonable Principle which fashions unqualified stuff, one single Providence, which dominates and governs everything, like the Stoics. No evil could arise if God were the Cause of everything, and no good, if God were not the Cause of something. For "the frame of the world is made by contrary tension," as Heraclitus said, "like that of a lyre or of a bow." And Euripides says:

> Evil and good could not subsist apart;
> These in the world are blent, and all is well.

Hence, there is this very ancient belief, come down from primitive sages and lawgivers to poets and philosophers, a belief which cannot be traced to any particular author, though it is held with an assurance strong and ineradicable, not only expressed in words and current speech, but spread everywhere in mystic rites and sacrifices, both barbarian and Hellenic—the belief, to wit, that neither does the universe swing loose without any mind or reason or government, simply by chance impulse, nor does one single Reason (*Logos*) rule and direct it, as if by a rudder or a bridle which it obeys, but that things are multifarious and mingled, good with evil. Indeed,

Nature in our sphere does not, speaking broadly, produce any unmixed thing; there is no one Dispenser who draws things, as a merchant may draw liquids, out of two jars and blends for each man his portion; but human life, and the kosmos itself, is a mixture of elements proceeding from two different and opposed origins, from two antagonistic Powers, one swaying things to the right along a straight line, the other beating them back and twisting them the other way. This is true, if not of the whole kosmos, at any rate of the earth and its immediate environment, the world on this side of the moon, which has become irregular and various, and such as to undergo all manner of change. For if Nature forbids our supposing anything to take place without a cause, and no one could put forward Good as the cause of Evil, then the universe must contain a special source and origin of Evil, as it does of Good.

This belief is held by the majority of men, and by the wisest of men. Some hold that there are two Gods, who work against each other, the Creator of good things and the Creator of evil things. Others call the better Power God, and the opposed Power a Daemon, as did Zoroaster the Mage, whom researchers declare to have lived five thousand years before the Trojan war. He called the Good Power Oromazes, and the Evil Power Areimanios, and he added that the Good Power resembled light more than any other sensible thing, and the other contrariwise resembled darkness and ignorance. And between the two, he said, was Mithras. For which reason the Persians call Mithras the Mediator. . . .

(There follows Plutarch's account of the Zoroastrian creed.)

The Chaldaeans call the planets gods, and they make

two of them beneficent, and two maleficent; the other three they represent as intermediate and neutral.

When we come to Hellenic beliefs, the case is plain to everybody. The Greeks make the good portion of the world that of Olympian Zeus, the sinister portion that of Hades. According to their mythology, Harmonia was the daughter of Aphrodite and of Ares, Ares being rugged and quarrelsome, and Aphrodite gracious and genial. And see how the philosophers come into line! Heraclitus says outright: "War is the father and king and lord of all." And in regard to Homer's prayer, that "Strife might perish from among gods and from among men," Heraclitus says that Homer "fails to see he is praying for the destruction of the world, which has its origin in fighting and antagonism." "The sun will not transgress his proper limits, or the Powers of Madness, the assistants of Justice, will find him out." Empedocles terms the beneficent principle *Philotēs* or *Philia* (Love) and he often calls it "august Harmony"; the bad principle he terms "accursed Strife" or "bloody Feud." The Pythagoreans have a whole string of names they apply to the Good, "the One," "the Definite," "the Abiding," "the Straight," "the Odd," "the Square," "the Equal," "the Right-hand," "the Shining"; whereas Evil is "the Dyad," "the Indefinite," "the Flowing," "the Bent," "the Even," "the Oblong," "the Unequal," "the Left-hand," "the Dark." They take, that is, these two opposites to be the origin of the world-process. Anaxagoras set Mind over against "the Unlimited"; Aristotle set Form over against Privation. Plato often hints darkly and covertly at the two opposed principles, calling the Good "the Same," and Evil "the Other." But in the *Laws*, being then an

old man, he spoke no longer in riddles and figures; he expressed himself in plain everyday speech. The kosmos, he said, was not moved by one single Soul, but possibly by a plurality of Souls—at any rate by not less than two. One of these Souls was beneficent, and the Soul opposed to this was the Maker of opposite things.[1] Between the two he admitted the existence of a third sort of being, not inanimate nor irrational nor without the power of moving itself, as some have construed him, but connected with both the other two, always reaching after the Good Soul, yearning for it and pursuing it, as the following part of this tract will show, which will trace the special affinity of Egyptian theology with this Platonic philosophy.

(2) Maximus of Tyre

All we know of the dates of Maximus is that he lived and discoursed at Rome in the middle or later part of the second century. Like Plutarch, he took Platonism for the basis of his theory of the world. His discourses, unlike Plutarch's conversational tracts, are rhetorically constructed sermons. The numbers of the Orations are given as in Hobein's edition (Teubner).

Do Men acquire Virtue by Divine Help?

xxxviii. 4–6.

Homer, speaking to Telemachus in the person of Nestor, says this about him:

> For I deem not
> That without the grace of the gods thou wast born and nurtured

The same poet calls all good men "divine," not, I think, because they are good by human contrivance, but because they are the work of Zeus. . . .

[1] Plutarch interpreted Plato's words in the *Laws* to mean an evil World-Soul: this is probably a mistake.

Shall we turn our attention to the philosophers, these, for instance, from the Lyceum and the beauteous Academy? They are not retailers of myths, not speakers in riddles, not such as seize on the marvellous; they declare everyday things in the words of the people, with the mind of the people. Let us first address their leader, thus: "That you value knowledge above everything else, Socrates, we hear you constantly assert. . . . Yet when I listen to your conversation with Phaedrus, or Charmides, or Theaetetus, or Alcibiades, I suspect that you do not make knowledge everything, but hold that men have a more venerable teacher, Nature, and that this was what you meant when you threw in a poor phrase somewhere in the *Dialogues*—"by divine allotment it has been given me to converse with Alcibiades" —or again where you call Phaedrus a "divine" person, or where you uttered a prediction about Isocrates somewhere in the *Dialogues*, when he was still quite young. What do you mean by all this, Socrates? Or, if you so desire, I will let you go and address myself to the writer of the *Dialogues* himself, my famous friend here from the Academy. Let him answer our earnest question, and tell us whether men can become good men by divine allotment—good men, just that and nothing else; I do not mean poets, so that you might cite me Hesiod, nor prophets, so that you might mention Melesagoras, nor purifiers, so that you might tell me of Epimenides. No: eliminate in each case the name of the special art, and add the virtue which makes men good in regard to the things which ordinary men have to do—manage a household discreetly, take a public part nobly in a city. About this kind of virtue tell me: Can a man acquire it, apart from human contrivance—a gift of God? Or stay, you too I will

refrain from troubling: the argument shall give answer to itself, as man may to man, speaking out boldly thus:

"Miserable man, what is this you would say, supposing that the fairest of all good things possessed by men can come most speedily by the contrivance of human art, and least easily from virtue God-given! Surely, you would not say that either divining or the mysteries or poetry or rites of purification or oracles, or all such things taken together, can be set in the scale against virtue. How then can you suppose that these things are instilled into the souls of men by divine afflatus, and a thing more precious than they, virtue, is the work of human art? You have indeed a high opinion of the Divine Being, if you think Him richly and abundantly furnished for the lesser benefits, and without resource for the greater ones! I will not yet insist, that if you see each of those lesser ones effectively bestowed, it must needs be that the greater ones are also. The bronze-smith may be unable to instruct the carpenter, the husbandman may be ignorant of navigation, the skipper of medicine, one man an expert in a particular province, another man unskilled. But God is not circumscribed thus within the range of a single art. If anything comes from Him, then the limitations indeed of the human soul may set a limit to the art, but in regard to the stores of Divine knowledge, it is a very little part of the whole. Consider whether God, who can allot and apportion to you those lesser things, is not able and willing very much rather to apportion to you virtue! Look at the matter in this way.

"You certainly believe that the Divine Being is the most perfect, the most self-sufficing, the strongest being there is, so that, were you to subtract anything from it, you would do an injury to the whole. For if He is not

perfect, He is not self-sufficing; contrariwise, if He is not self-sufficing, He is short of being perfect; and if He is neither self-sufficing nor perfect, how can He be strong? But since He is all three—self-sufficing and perfect and strong—then, as perfect, He wills good things; as self-sufficing, He possesses them; as strong, He has power to give them, and if He wills and has and can, how can He fail to give? He who has and does not give, lacks the will: he who wills, but has not, lacks the power; but how can He who both has and wills, not have the power also? Further, if He has good things, He has the most perfect good things, and the most perfect of good things is virtue. And He gives that which He has. So there is no possibility of this good thing[1] coming to men otherwise than from its source in God. Indeed no good thing at all which men have, but comes from the gods.

"In what way then does virtue come from God? Humanity as a whole is by its original nature twofold. One element in it is disposed to virtue; the other element to evil. The evil stands in need of someone to chastise it; the virtue, of someone to preserve it. An evil nature, if it gets a good controller—law and custom—gains this, that it does not inflict pain upon its neighbours; it does not in this way acquire an increase of good, so much as a diminution of hurt. But souls of the best nature are still in an uncertain condition, swaying in a middle region between the extreme of virtue and the extreme of evil. They need God to stand by them in the struggle, to help them by inclining them and guiding them to the better side. A gradual slipping into foulness is the effect of congenital frailty, through which even souls

[1] Reading τοῦτο τὸ (Davisius) for ἄλλο τι.

of the finer sort are enticed by pleasures and lusts and dragged downwards along the same road as vicious souls."

God acknowledged by all Men

xi. 10–12.

In the midst of this great conflict and clash and discord, you may discern one law, one confession prevalent everywhere in unison all over the earth—that there is one God, the King and Father of all, and many gods, the children of God, fellow-rulers with God. This the Greek alike declares and the barbarian, the dweller inland and the dweller on the sea, the wise and the unwise. Go to the shores of the Ocean, there too you will find gods, rising in close proximity for some men, setting for others. Does Plato give his suffrage and lay down his laws in any sense opposed to this? Does he not speak with the same utterance and share the same passion, the utterance of noblest import, the passion that is most profoundly true? What is yonder thing? The eye answers: The sun. What is that? The ear answers: Thunder. What are all these things of proportion and beauty, seasons and variations, temperature of the air, teeming of animals, fruitful growths? The Soul answers: They are all the works of God; they yearn after the Artist who made them; they have a dim sense of the art. If in the course of all the ages two or three men have been born, a breed godless and degraded and dull, astray in sight, deluded in hearing, destitute of soul, without reason, without generative power, without fruit, monstrous as a lion without courage, an ox without horns, a bird without wings—even of such a breed as this you will inquire not in vain about God: they know, in their own despite; they speak,

albeit unwillingly; yes, though you take away God's goodness, like Leucippus; though you extend to Him our passions, like Democritus; though you change His nature, like Strato; though you attribute pleasure to Him, like Epicurus; though you assert that He does not exist, like Diagoras; though you profess ignorance, like Protagoras.

How should a man understand God so long as he is agitated by a multitude of lusts and extravagant thoughts? As well might one in the clamour and confusion of a democracy think to hear the voice of the law and the ruler! . . . For when the soul has fallen into this turmoil, and surrendered herself to be carried along by the irresistible wave, she must swim through a sea whence escape is indeed hard—unless Philosophy take pity on her and suggest her own reasonings, as Leucothea gave the veil to Odysseus. How then may a man swim safely through and see God? The whole indeed you will not see till He calls you to Himself; and call you He will at no distant date. Wait for His call. Old age will come to you—the guide thither—and Death, about whom the coward laments, whose approach sets him trembling, but the lover of God bids Death welcome, and has good courage when he sees him come. But if, even in the present time, you crave to learn God's nature, how should one declare it? One may say that God is fair, the most radiant of all fair things. A body is not fair; beauty flows in upon a body from elsewhere. A meadow is not fair; the meadow too has its beauty from elsewhere. The beauty of a river, of the sea, of the sky, of the gods in the sky—all this beauty flows from that transcendent Source—from a wellspring inexhaustible and undefiled. Each individual thing, according to the measure in which

it partakes of this beauty, is fair and steadfast and durable: so far as it fails to partake of it, a thing is ugly and perishes and decays. If this suffice, you have seen God; if not, by what parable should I convey a notion of Him? Conceive in your thought, I would say, something which is not material size nor colour nor shape nor any other mode undergone by matter; rather as if a beautiful body were hidden from view by many variegated garments, and a lover unclothed it, in order to take clear knowledge of it: just in such wise do you strip away in your mind this covering and the activity of the eyes, and you will see what remains—that Object itself as you yearn to behold it.

But if your infirmity forbids you the vision of Him, the Father and Maker, it suffices for you at the present time that you behold His works, that you do homage to His multitudinous and manifold children, whose number is not according to the saying of the Boeotian poet; gods, sons and friends of God, are not "thirty thousand" only, but beyond all apprehension in number —the sidereal beings in the sky, the daemonic beings in the aether. I want to present to you my meaning by a clearer figure. Conceive a mighty state, a powerful kingdom, all swayed voluntarily in unison according to the one soul of the best and most august of kings; the frontiers of His realm not the river Halys, not the Hellespont, not the Lake Maeotis, nay not the shores of Ocean, but heaven above and earth beneath—heaven like a great wall set round about, unbreakable, containing in itself every creature which exists, earth like a prison and house of bondage for sinful bodies. And conceive the Great King Himself tranquil, like Law, affording to those who obey Him the salvation

which in Him subsists, and, sharers in His government, many visible gods and many invisible, some thronged about the very portals of His palace, as it were ushers and princes of the blood, fellows of His table and His hearth, others ministers to the aforesaid, others of yet lower degree. Behold an hierarchy and ordered system of rule going down from God to the earth!

Discarnate Souls

ix. 6.

Such is the Soul—it holds together, by its own virtue, and steadies and establishes the Body which is always floating and buffeted and tossed about in the surge of the waves. When all these sinews give out, and breath, and all the other tackling by which for a while Body was attached to Soul, the Body perishes and disappears underground, but the Soul escapes all by itself, and now holds together and establishes itself. Such a soul has already the name of *daemon*, a creature of the aether, an emigrant thither from the earth; like one who from a land of barbarians has come amongst the Greeks, from a city lawless, despot-ridden, torn by faction, has come to a city where law prevails, where the ruler is a king, where all is peace.[1] The case seems to me to correspond closely with the picture in Homer, where he says that Hephaistos portrayed upon a golden shield two cities, in one of which there were marriages and banquets and dancing and holy songs and torch-processions, and in the other wars and factions and robbery and fighting and wailing and lamentation and groans. So is earth to the aether: the one a world of peace, full of holy songs and divine dances, and the other full of confused noise and

[1] The parallel in Dante, *Paradiso* xxxi. 31–40, is striking.

agitation and discord. For when a soul departs hence thither, having put off the body, which it leaves to the earth to decay in its own time, by the law of its own nature, when a soul becomes, of human, divine, then it surveys with pure eyes the spectacles congenial to it, no flesh any longer to obstruct its vision, no colours to dazzle it, no multitude of shapes to confound it, no thick air to wall it in: it looks with ideal Eyes upon ideal Beauty, and rejoices. It pities itself in regard to its former life and felicitates itself in regard to its present. life. It pities, moreover, the souls, its kindred, who are yet wanderers on the earth, and out of charity it would fain join their throng and lift up those who fall. And a charge is laid upon it by God, to range the earth and penetrate amongst all sorts of men, every human condition and temper and business, to succour the good, to avenge those who suffer wrong, to impose the penalty upon those who do the wrong.

Defence of Images

ii. 1–2.

Gods are helpers to men, all gods to all men, but for different groups of men there is a difference in the sound of the names by which they express their faith, and men have assigned variously to the gods forms of worship and visual representations, according to the particular benefits they have each received. Thus sailors on a rock unreached by the waves will set up some oars as homage to the deities of the sea: thus, too, a shepherd will honour Pan by singling out for him some tall pine, or some dark cave. Husbandmen honour Dionysus by fixing in the vine-row a branch left just as it grew, a rustic form of image. To Artemis wellsprings are sacred and hollow

glens and pasture-land teeming with wild life. The things to which, as images of Zeus, primitive man attached a holy name, were the summits of high hills—Olympus, Ida, any other sky-neighbouring mountain. Homage has been paid to rivers, either because of their utility, for which the Egyptians honour the Nile; or because of their beauty, for which the Thessalians honour the Peneïus; or because of their size, for which the Scythians honour the Ister; or because of some old sacred story, for which the Aetolians honour the Acheloös; or because of a law, for which the Spartans honour the Eurotas; or because of some mystic rite, for which the Athenians honour the Ilissus. . . .

It is not that the Divine Being stands in any need of images or statues. It is poor humanity, because of its weakness and the distance dividing it from God, "as the heaven is high above the earth," which has contrived these things as symbols. People who have an exceptionally strong power of mental realisation, who can lift their soul straight away to heaven and come into contact with God—such people, it may be, do not stand in any need of images. But such people are few amongst men. You never find men in the mass with a realisation of God and able to dispense with aids of this kind. It is as with the teaching of letters to children. Teachers have an ingenious way of drawing the letters faintly and guiding the child's hand over them, till the mental realisation required for the art of writing is acquired by practice. Just in the same way, it seems to me, the old lawgivers invented images for mankind, as it were for a troop of children, symbols of the honour shown to the gods, a leading of men by the hand along the way to mental realisation.

(3) Numenius

Probably belonged to the second part of the second century A.D. By his distinction of the second Maker-God from the Higher God, the Father, he prepared the way for Plotinus a century later, though his theory differed substantially from that of Plotinus. Numenius identified the First God with Mind (*Nous*), whereas for Plotinus the First God is above Mind. The third member in Numenius's triad was not Soul (as with Plotinus) but the Kosmos, the "Third God." Numenius, more than any other Greek philosopher, shows the influence of Judaism, though he probably knew the Old Testament only through the transfiguring medium of Philo or Platonising Jews like Philo. His Second God resembles Philo's Logos. Numenius's contemporary, Justin Martyr, applied the term "Second God" to Christ. It was Numenius who called Plato a "Moses talking Attic." We have only fragments of Numenius preserved by Eusebius. The following extracts are translated from Mr. W. Scott's text in *Hermetica*, vol. ii. pp. 77 ff.

The First God and the Second God

Eusebius, *Praepar. Evang.* XI. xviii. 1; 5, 8.

He who would have understanding about the Divine Being, the First and the Second, must begin by setting things properly in order. . . . The First God, subsisting in Himself, is simple, because, abiding altogether with Himself, He is incapable of any division: the Second God, on the contrary, is One indeed in His own nature, but is a Duality so far as He has relations with Stuff. He makes Stuff a unity, but He Himself is broken up by Stuff, which has a character marked by concupiscence and is in flux. In that He abides not with the Intelligential—for then He would abide with Himself—because His vision is turned towards Stuff, He becomes concerned with this, and ceases to contemplate Himself. He takes hold of the sensible and occupies Himself with it; yet He draws it up to His own character, for he yearns after Stuff. . .

Indeed there is no necessity for the First God to make

anything; nay, we ought to look upon the First God as the *Father* of the Maker. If, therefore, we were talking about the Maker, and said that because He was good from the beginning, He was bound to make the best possible universe,[1] that would be to approach the argument in a way appropriate to the Being in question. If on the other hand it is not the Maker, but the First God, about whom we speak, then the statement just made would be impious. Let no such thing ever pass our lips. I will go on to see whether by quest elsewhere we can capture the right argument.

Before capturing the argument, however, let us make to ourselves a profession of our belief, such as no hearer could misunderstand: the First God engages in no works of any kind; He is the King: but the Maker-God governs, going right through the heavens. Through Him is the sending forth to us of the Mind (*Nous*) that is in us; for the Mind is sent down by transmission to all those who are ordained to partake of it. And so long as this God has His face towards each one of us and looks at each one of us, so long our bodies live and act, the God taking care of them by the radiations of His influence; but when the God turns round to the contemplation of Himself, then our bodies die, but the Mind goes on living, enjoying a life of bliss. . . .

Praepar. Evang. xi. 18, 24.

The steersman borne along through the mid-seas, high on his bench above the steering-gear, directs the ship by the rudder, as he sits; but his eyes and his mind are lifted straight to sky, strained towards the things above; his way is made plain to him there above, in the

[1] An allusion to Plato, *Timaeus*.

heavens, though it is an earthly sea that he sails. Just so, the Maker, having bound up Stuff in the frame of the world, so that it should neither escape from control nor wander away, is Himself seated above it, as on a ship above the sea, and directs the frame of the world, using the Ideas as rudders, and looking, not towards the sky, but towards the God above, who draws His eyes to Himself. From that contemplation He gets His power to distinguish [between the right course and the wrong], whilst from His yearning [after the First God, the Father] He gets His impulse to act.

Knowledge of God

Praepar. Evang. xi. 22, 1 ff.

Of bodies we can get knowledge either by noting their resemblance to other similar things, or by the indications to be found in adjacent things. But of the Good [i.e. the First God] by no possibility can we get knowledge by anything adjacent to It or by anything like It. We need —nay, take this figure. Think of someone sitting on a high cliff and seeing, far out at sea, a fishing-boat, one of those small skiffs, a single boat, alone, nothing else near it: by straining his eyes he can just see it at one moment; at another moment it is gone. So must a man go far away from sensible things to converse with the Good, alone with the Alone, where there is no other man, no other living thing, nothing corporeal small or great; only a vast divine solitude, unutterable, indescribable, the region where the Good ranges, Its playing-meads and pleasances; and the Good Itself abides in peace, in lovingkindness—the Good which is the Quiet, the . . ., the Gracious, riding upon That-which-is. But if anyone

clings to sensible things, and imagines that the Good hovers over these, if he then lives sumptuously and thinks that he has met with the Good, he is altogether astray. For in very truth the method of attaining That is no easy one, but one above merely human skill, and the best thing is to detach all interest from sensible things, and gallantly grapple with [mystical] mathematics, contemplate Numbers, and so learn by study to know this: What is . . .? [Unfortunately the following word is uncertain. According to Dindorf's reading, "What is That-which-is?" According to Mullach's reading, "What is the One?" W. Scott suggests, "What is the Bodiless?" or "What is the Intelligential?"]

XIII. SECOND-CENTURY BELIEVERS

(1) Pausanias

Pausanias, and his contemporary, Aelius Aristides, represent the men of literary education who still believed in the traditional Hellenic gods and, more or less, in the old myths. Pausanias was writing under Marcus Aurelius (in A.D. 174). His extant work is an invaluable guide-book to the temples and religious monuments of Greece. Whilst Pausanias was, in a general way, a believer, it will be seen that he did occasionally subject stories told him to criticism of a rationalist kind.

The extracts are taken from Sir James Frazer's translation.

Dangerous to see the Gods

x. 32, 13–18.

About forty furlongs from the temple of Asklepios [near Tithorea in Boeotia] is an enclosure and sacred shrine of Isis, the holiest of all the sanctuaries made by Greeks for the Egyptian goddess. For the Tithoreans deem it not lawful to dwell round about it, and there is no admission to the shrine save for those whom Isis herself has favoured with an invitation in a dream. The same thing is done also by the nether gods in the cities on the Maeander: they send visions in dreams to whomsoever they wish to enter their shrines. . . . They say that once upon a time, when the pyre began to burn, a profane fellow who had no right to go down into the shrine rashly entered it out of curiosity. The whole place seemed to him full of spectres; and scarcely had he returned to Tithorea and told what he

had beheld when he gave up the ghost. I have heard a like story from a Phoenician man. He said that the Egyptians hold the festival of Isis at the time when they say she is mourning for Osiris. At that time the Nile begins to rise, and it is a common saying among the natives that it is the tears of Isis that cause the river to rise and water the fields. Well, then, my informant said that at that season the Roman governor of Egypt bribed a man to go down to the shrine of Isis at Coptus. The man who was thus sent in returned from the shrine; but after he had told all that he beheld, he, too, I was informed, immediately expired. Thus it appears to be a true saying of Homer's,[1] that it is ill for mankind to see the gods in bodily shape.

Criticism of Myths

iii. 15, 10. At Sparta.

A little way farther on is a small hill, on which is an ancient temple with a wooden image of the armed Aphrodite. This is the only temple I know that has an upper story: the upper story is sacred to Morpho. Morpho is a surname of Aphrodite: she is seated wearing a veil and with fetters on her feet. They say that Tyndareus put the fetters on her, meaning to symbolise by these bonds the fidelity of women to their husbands. The other explanation, that Tyndareus punished the goddess with fetters because he thought it was she who had brought his daughters [Clytaemnestra and Helen] to shame, is one that I cannot accept for a moment. It would have been too silly to imagine that by making a cedar-wood doll and dubbing it Aphrodite, he could punish the goddess.

[1] Iliad xx. 131.

iii. 25, 5, 6.

On the cape [Taenarum] is a temple like a cave, and in front of it an image of Poseidon. Some Greek poets have said that here Herakles dragged up the hound of hell. But no road leads underground through the cave, nor is it easy to believe that gods have an underground abode in which the souls of the dead assemble. Hecataeus, the Milesian, hit on a likely explanation: he said that Taenarum was the home of a dreadful snake called the hound of hell, because its bite was instantly fatal; and this snake, he said, was brought by Herakles for Eurystheus. Homer, who was the first to call the creature brought by Herakles the hound of hell, neither gave it a proper name nor made a monster of it, like the Chimaera. But later poets invented the name Cerberus, and endued him with three heads, representing him in all other respects as a dog. Whereas Homer no more implied that the creature was the domestic dog than if he had called a serpent the hound of hell.

Pausanias's Beliefs

viii. 2, 3–7.

Lycaon brought a human babe to the altar of Lycaean Zeus, and sacrificed it, and poured out the blood on the altar: and they say that immediately after the sacrifice he was turned into a wolf. For my own part I believe the tale: it has been handed down among the Arcadians from antiquity, and probability is in its favour. For the men of that time, by reason of their righteousness and piety, were guests of the gods, and sat with them at table; the gods openly visited the good with honour, and the bad with their displeasure. Indeed men were raised to the rank of gods in those days, and are worshipped down

to the present time. Such were Aristaeus, and the Cretan damsel Britomartis; and Herakles, the son of Alcmena; and Amphiaraus, son of Oicles; and moreover Pollux and Castor. So we may well believe that Lycaon was turned into a wild beast, and Niobe, daughter of Tantalus, into a stone. But in the present age, when wickedness is growing to such a height, and spreading over every land and every city, men are changed into gods no more, save in the hollow rhetoric which flattery addresses to power; and the wrath of the gods at the wicked is reserved for a distant future when they shall have gone hence. In the long course of the ages, many events in the past and not a few in the present have been brought into general discredit by persons who build a superstructure of falsehood on a foundation of truth. For example, they say that from the time of Lycaon downwards a man has always been turned into a wolf at the sacrifice of Lycaean Zeus, but that the transformation is not for life; for if, while he is a wolf, he abstains from human flesh, in the ninth year afterwards he changes back into a man, but if he has tasted human flesh he remains a beast for ever. In like manner they say that Niobe on Mount Sipylus sheds tears in summer. I have also been told that the griffins are spotted like the pards, and that the Tritons speak with a human voice, though others say they blow through a pierced shell. Lovers of the marvellous are prone to heighten the marvels they hear tell of by adding touches of their own; and thus they debase truth by alloying it with fiction.

Asklepios (*Aesculapius*)

vii. 23, 7–8.

Not far from the sanctuary of Ilithyia [. . . at Aegium

in Arcadia] is a precinct of Asklepios, with images of Health and Asklepios. . . . In this sanctuary of Asklepios a man of Sidon entered into a discussion with me. He maintained that the Phoenicians had juster views of the divine nature than the Greeks, and he instanced particularly the Phoenician legend that Asklepios had Apollo for his father, but no mortal woman for his mother. "For Asklepios," he said, "is the air, and as such is favourable to the health, not only of mankind, but of every living thing; and Apollo is the sun, and most rightly is he called the father of Asklepios, since by ordering his course with due regard to the seasons he imparts to the air its wholesomeness." "Agreed," cried I, "but that is just what the Greeks say too. For at Titane, in the land of Sicyon, the same image is named both Health and Asklepios, clearly because the sun's course over the earth is the source of health to mankind."

(2) Aelius Aristides

Publius Aelius Aristides, of Adriani in Mysia (born A.D. 129, died probably A.D. 189), was one of the chief "sophists," i.e. virtuosos in the writing and declaiming of Greek, of his day. He was a man of febrile religiousness, devoted especially to the worship of Asklepios. His praise of Sarapis has already been given on pages 71ff.

Praise of Athena

Oration II.

May the dream come true! And do thou, O Lady Athena, grant me, with all other good fortune and grace, the touch of thy hand upon this present address, and fulfil the vision according to its preciousness, according to the clearness with which it was shown in the night season. In order that it may actually come to pass, plainly

and surely, behold, this address which I herewith present thee shall be of mixed character, in part prayer, in part hymn of praise.

All the fairest things are connected with Athena and come from Athena. But nothing is more noteworthy than the mode of her begetting: to say it in brief, she is the One Child of the Maker and King of the universe, the Only One of the Only One. For he had no one of equal dignity with himself, of whom he might bring her to be, and so he retired into the solitude of his own being and himself out of himself generated and bare the Goddess. For which reason she alone is the authentic issue of the Father, of race equal and homogeneous. And, what is a yet greater thing, he produced her from the fairest part of himself, from his head; whence one may say that neither from God's head could any fairer thing than Athena have arisen, nor could Athena have had any nobler place of origin. But in both respects the worth of the two was balanced.

Begotten then of Zeus, of Zeus alone, from the head of Zeus, she had in the train of her dignities yet a fourth thing, no less wonderful than the others—what the story tells us of the apparition seen when God's head was cleft open: for she mounted aloft instantly, all in armour, like the sun arising invested in his beams; indeed, while yet within she had been arrayed by the Father. Wherefore it is not lawful for her ever at any time to leave the Father; always she cleaves to his side and shares his life, as if she were physically inseparable from him. The spirit she inbreathes draws her to him: she is with him, she and he together alone, for she is mindful of her birth, and she renders him the fitting reward for his travail-pangs. Yea,

methinks, she came into being first of the gods; at that time at any rate none but the oldest gods yet existed, and they few in number; [but she existed,] since Zeus could not have distributed all the things of the world, had he not caused Athena to sit beside him, his assessor and counsellor. She alone wears the aegis through unending time; she alone in Homeric battles is furnished with the weapons of the Father: as in a court of conjurors, the same arms are wielded simultaneously both by Zeus and by the Goddess. Such dignity has she in the Father's eyes, being partner with him in everything, and engrossing without a rival the rights of seniority, that of those poets whom we might regard as having come nearest the truth in regard to the Goddess, one, Homer, when he makes mention of her aegis and of the god who essayed to wound her through it, describes it as a thing

Terrible, which not even the thunder of Zeus can vanquish [1]—

words of sure aim, since the things which Zeus has from Athena are of far greater value to him than his thunders and levin-bolts—and the other, Pindar, says that, seated at the Father's right hand she receives from him the commands which he issues to the gods. She is greater than a messenger ("angel"), for to her first the orders of the Father are delivered and she imposes them upon the messengers ("angels"), upon this or that one, as the case may be: she is, as it were, the interpreter of the Divine Will to the gods. Since she abides on the head of Olympus and was born from the head of God, the high places of all cities are hers—she has taken possession of them in truth by the strength of her hand—and the heads of those men whom the gods love are not trodden down

[1] Iliad xxi. 401.

by Evil Delusion, but Athena holds them up and walks in them, keeping the sign of her own birth. . . .

Love of men and power she has both together in the supreme degree. What greater evidence can be given of her power than that she is everywhere victorious? For Victory has no right to dispose of Athena; it is Athena who has the right to dispose of Victory, and that always. Of her love of men the story of Orestes bears witness. When he came, persecuted, from Argos to Athens, and at Athens stood prosecuted by the Eumenides, and when the votes of condemnation and acquittal were equal, she gave her casting-vote and saved him. And to this day she saves all men in judgment, when the votes are equal: it was resolved, after that precedent, that when the votes are equal, Athena's vote should always be added, for acquittal.

Further, whereas Athena must abide a virgin for ever, and no god and no man touch her in the way of the flesh, she has received in this matter also wonderful honours from the Father—to her, the virgin, have been given the prerogatives of the happy mother. When Leto was vagrant over land and sea, it was Athena who guided her to the place where it was ordained that she should come to childbed. And when she brought forth, it was Athena who was midwife, who received the children and crowned Apollo according to the holy hymn of the Greeks; so that, whereas to other women in travail Artemis gives helps, it was Athena who gave help when Artemis herself was born! . . .

Is there anyone in the world who cannot get benefit from Athena? What surer partner can a man have? What fire is unescapable when Athena—follows not, but leads the way? Of all gods, and all goddesses, she alone has not victory attached to her in an epithet, but *is*

Victory. She alone has the names of Craft-worker (*Ergane*) and Providence, having assumed the appellations which indicate her as the saviour of the whole order of things. Prophets and priests invoke her as the Bestower of Purification, as the Warder-off of evil, as the Power presiding over the most perfect rites of cleansing—and with good reason. If, indeed, we abandon the mythological way of speaking, and say in plain forthright speech the truth about the Goddess, she it is who holds off our real, our universal, foes, who brings each man's particular war to a good issue, ridding us of the enemies which cleave to us and grow up with us, those enemies by which houses and states are overthrown or ever they hear the sound of the trumpet (so to put it), giving each man the true, the sovereign, victory, one very different from the Cadmean victory and in truth Olympian—the victory by which folly and lasciviousness and cowardice and disorderliness and factiousness and insolence and contempt of the gods, and all other such-like things, take their departure, whilst wisdom and temperance and courage and concord and orderliness and right conduct and honour, paid to the gods and given by the gods, enter in to take their place. To sum up the matter in brief: the portion of Athena is the whole assemblage of the gods, is all things. Such prerogatives are not far removed from those of Zeus, and in every regard we may see in both the same things. And here it were well that I should stop. The discourse has come back to its beginning—or rather has come to its extreme term. From what has been said, one would not go wrong in calling her the Power of God. What need then to lose oneself among the particulars, narrating her actions one by one, when one may say briefly that the mighty works of Zeus

are the mighty works of Zeus and of Athena together? But do thou,

O issuer forth from imperial halls

(as a chorus in Aeschylus sang), from the halls of thy Father's heavenly house, and from those which are greatest in this earth of ours, grant me, according to the vision which thou didst show me in the night-season, to receive honour from both the emperors,[1] and grant me to be consummate in thought and speech. May whoever speaks in opposition to me have reason to be sorry! May I gain victory to the extent of my desire, and in my own self first may victory fall to what is best!

[So many phrases in this praise of Athena are strikingly parallel to the phrases used about personified Wisdom in Proverbs viii. ("The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old . . . when he established the heavens I was there . . . when he marked out the foundations of the earth: then I was with him as a master workman, and I was daily his delight") and parallel to what the Christians, following the Old Testament idea of Wisdom, said of God the Son, that the old Jebb (quoted in Dindori's edition of 1829) says roundly that Aristides is here wresting to his own purposes the language of Scripture and the Church. Few people would now suppose this: the conception of personified Wisdom as closely associated with the chief God belongs to old Greek mythology, and might naturally occur in a somewhat similar form wherever men clothed their thoughts of God in imagery.]

[1] Marcus Aurelius and Verus.

XIV. SECOND-CENTURY SCEPTICISM (LUCIAN)

Lucian, of Syrian race, a native of Samosata on the Euphrates, was the most brilliant Greek man of letters after the Christian era (born about A.D. 120, died about A.D. 200). He saw little in religion but credulity and imposture, a spirit akin to Voltaire.

Translations by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, (Clarendon Press).

The Gods and their Champion

From ZEUS TRAGOEDUS. News has come to Olympus that at Athens, Timocles, a Stoic philosopher, is going to maintain the reality of Providence in public debate with the formidable Epicurean, Damis. Zeus is profoundly alarmed and holds a council of the gods regarding what is to be done. At last the bronze Hermes of the Agora, whom Zeus playfully calls by the human name Hermagoras, arrives post-haste with the news, which he begins to announce in tragic verse, that the champions are actually in the field.

Zeus. Truce to your iambics, my excellent Hermagoras; I know the pair. But tell me whether the fight has been going on long.

Hermes. Not yet; they were still skirmishing—slinging invective at long range.

Zeus. Then we have only, Gods, to look over and listen. Let the Hours unbar, draw back the clouds, and open the doors of Heaven.

Upon my word, what a vast gathering! And I do not quite like the looks of Timocles; he is trembling; he has lost his head; he will spoil everything; it is perfectly plain, he will not be able to stand up to Damis. Well, there is one thing left us: we can pray for him.

Inwardly, silently, lest Damis hear.

Timocles. What, you miscreant, no Gods? no Providence?

Damis. No, no; you answer my question first; what makes you believe in them?

Timocles. None of that, now; the *onus probandi* is with you, scoundrel.

Damis. None of that now; it is with you.

(*Zeus.* At this game ours is much the better man—louder-voiced, rougher-tempered. Good, Timocles; stick to invective; that is your strong point; once get off that, he will hook and hold you up like a fish.)

Timocles. I solemnly swear I will not answer first.

Damis. Well, put your question then; so much you score by your oath. But no abuse, please.

Timocles. Done. Tell me then, and be damned to you, do you deny the Gods exercise providence?

Damis. I do.

Timocles. What, are all the events we see uncontrolled, then?

Damis. Yes.

Timocles. And the regulation of the universe is not under any God's care?

Damis. No.

Timocles. And everything moves casually, by blind tendency?

Damis. Yes.

Timocles. Gentlemen, can you tolerate such sentiments? Stone the blasphemer.

Damis. What do you mean by hounding them against me? Who are you that you should protest in the Gods' name? They do not even protest in their own; they have sent no judgment on me, and they have had time enough to hear me, if they have ears.

Timocles. They do hear you; they do; and some day their vengeance will find you out.

Damis. Pray when are they likely to have time to spare for me? They are far too busy, according to you, with all the infinite concerns of the universe on their hands. That is why they have never punished you for your perjuries and—well, for the rest of your performances, let me say, not to break our contract about abuse. And yet I am at a loss to conceive any more convincing proof they could have given of their Providence, than if they had trounced you as you deserve. But no doubt they are from home—t'other side of Oceanus, possibly, on a visit to "the blameless Ethiopians." We know they have a way of going there to dinner, self-invited sometimes.

Timocles. What answer is possible to such ribaldry?

Damis. The answer I have been waiting for all this time; you can tell me what made you believe in divine Providence.

Timocles. Firstly, the order of nature—the sun running his regular course, the moon the same, the circling seasons, the growth of plants, the generation of living things, the ingenious adaptations in these latter for nutrition, thought, movement, locomotion; look at a carpenter or a shoemaker, for instance; and the thing is infinite. All these effects, and no effecting Providence?

Damis. You beg the question: whether the effects *are* produced by Providence is just what is not yet proved. Your description of nature I accept; it does not follow that there is definite design in it; it is not impossible that things now similar and homogeneous have developed from widely different origins. But you give the name "order" to mere blind tendency. And you will be very

angry if one follows your appreciative catalogue of nature in all its variety, but stops short of accepting it as a proof of detailed Providence. So, as the play says,

Here lurks a fallacy; bring me sounder proof.

Timocles. I cannot admit that further proof is required; nevertheless I will give you one. Will you allow Homer to have been an admirable poet?

Damis. Surely.

Timocles. Well, *he* maintains Providence, and warrants my belief.

Damis. Magnificent! why, everyone will grant you Homer's poetic excellence; but not that he, or any other poet, for that matter, is good authority on questions of this sort. *Their* object, of course, is not truth, but fascination; they call in the charms of metre, they take tales for the vehicle of what instruction they give, and, in short, all their efforts are devoted to pleasure.

But I should be glad to hear which parts of Homer you pin your faith to. Where he tells how the daughter, the brother, and the wife of Zeus conspired to imprison him? If Thetis had not been moved to compassion and called Briareus, you remember, our excellent Zeus would have been seized and manacled; and his gratitude to her induced him to delude Agamemnon with a lying dream, and bring about the deaths of a number of Greeks. Do you see? The reason was that, if he had struck and blasted Agamemnon's self with a thunderbolt, his double-dealing would have come to light. Or perhaps you found the Diomed story most convincing? Diomed wounded Aphrodite, and afterwards Ares himself, at Athene's instigation; and then the Gods actually fell to blows and went a-tilting—without distinction of sex; Athene

overthrew Ares, exhausted no doubt with his previous wound from Diomed; and

> Hermes the stark and stanch 'gainst Leto stood.

Or did you put your trust in Artemis? She was a sensitive lady, who resented not being invited to Oeneus's banquet, and by way of vengeance sent a monstrous irresistible boar to ravage his country. Is it with tales like these that Homer has prevailed on you?

(*Zeus.* Goodness me, what a shout, Gods! They are all cheering Damis. And our man seems posed; he is frightened and trembles; he is going to throw up the sponge, I am certain of it; he looks round for a gap to get away through.)

Timocles. And will you scout Euripides too, then? Again and again he brings Gods on the stage, and shows them upholding virtue in the Heroes, but chastising wickedness and impiety (like yours).

Damis. My noble philosopher, if that is how the tragedians have convinced you, you have only two alternatives: you must suppose that divinity is temporarily lodged either in the actor—a Polus, an Aristodemus, a Satyrus—or else in the actual masks, buskins, long tunics, cloaks, gloves, stomachers, padding, and ornamental paraphernalia in general of tragedy—a manifest absurdity; for when Euripides can speak his own sentiments unfettered by dramatic necessity, observe the freedom of his remarks:

> Thou seest yon infinite Aether high above,
> Engirdling Earth with soft, intangible arms;
> Hold this for Zeus; give this the name of God.[1]

[1] I have substituted for Mr. Fowler's translation of these lines, the translation given on p. 6, so as not to have two different versions of the passage in the same book.

And again:

> Zeus, whate'er Zeus may be (for, save by hearsay,
> I know not)—

and there is more of the same sort.

Timocles. Well, but all men—ay, all nations—have acknowledged and fêted Gods; was it all delusion?

Damis. Thank you; a timely reminder; national observances show better than anything else how vague religious theory is. Confusion is endless, and beliefs as many as believers. Scythia makes offering to a scimitar, Thrace to the Samian runaway Zamolxis, Phrygia to a Month-god, Ethiopia to a Day-goddess, Cyllene to Phales, Assyria to a dove, Persia to fire, Egypt to water. In Egypt, though, besides the universal worship of water, Memphis has a private cult of the ox, Pelusium of the onion, other cities of the ibis or the crocodile, others again of baboon, cat, or monkey. Nay, the very villages have their specialities: one deifies the right shoulder, and another across the river the left; one a half-skull, another an earthenware bowl or platter. Come, my fine fellow, is it not all ridiculous?

(*Momus, the fault-finder amongst the Gods.* What did I tell you, Gods? All this was sure to come out and be carefully overhauled.

Zeus. You did, Momus, and your strictures were justified; if once we come safe out of this present peril, I will try to introduce reforms.)

Timocles. Infidel! where do you find the source of oracles and prophecies, if not in the Gods and their Providence?

Damis. About oracles, friend, the less said the better; I shall ask you to choose your instances, you see. Will Apollo's answer to the Lydian suit you? That was as

symmetrical as a double-edged knife; or say, it faced both ways, like those Hermae which are made double, alike whether you look at front or back. Consider; will Croesus's passage of the Halys destroy his own realm, or Cyrus's? Yet the wretched Sardian paid a long price for his ambidextrous hexameter.

(*Momus.* The man is realising just my worst apprehensions. Where is our handsome musician now? Ay, there you are; go down and plead your own cause against him.

Zeus. Hush, Momus; you are murdering our feelings; it is no time for recrimination.)

Timocles. Have a care, Damis; this is sacrilege, no less; what you say amounts to razing the temples and upsetting the altars.

Damis. Oh, not *all* the altars; what harm do they do, so long as incense and perfume is the worst of it? As for Artemis's altar at Tauri, though, and her hideous feasts, I should like it overturned from base to cornice.

(*Zeus.* Whence comes this resistless plague among us? There is none of us he spares; he is as free with his tongue as a tub-orator,

And grips by turns the innocent and guilty.

Momus. The innocent? You will not find many of those among us, Zeus. He will soon come to laying hands upon some of the great and eminent, I daresay.)

Timocles. Do you close your ears even to Zeus's thunder, atheist?

Damis. I clearly cannot shut out the thunder; whether it is Zeus's thunder, you know better than I perhaps; you may have interviewed the Gods. Travellers from Crete tell another story: there is a tomb there with an

inscribed pillar, stating that Zeus is long dead, and not going to thunder any more.

(*Momus.* I could have told you that was coming long ago. What, Zeus? pale? and your teeth chattering? What is the matter? You should cheer up, and treat such manikins with lofty contempt.

Zeus. Contempt? See what a number of them there is—how set against us they are already—and he has them fast by the ears.

Momus. Well, but you have only to choose, and you can let down your golden cord, and then every man of them

With earth and sky and all thou canst draw up.[1])

Timocles. Blasphemer, have you ever been a voyage?

Damis. Many.

Timocles. Well then, the wind struck the canvas and filled the sails, and it or the oars gave you way, but there was a person responsible for steering, and for the safety of the ship?

Damis. Certainly.

Timocles. Now that ship would not have sailed without a steersman; and do you suppose that this great universe drifts unsteered and uncontrolled?

(*Zeus.* Good, this time, Timocles; a cogent illustration, that.)

Damis. But, you pattern of piety, an earthly navigator makes his plans, takes his measures, gives his orders, with a single eye to efficiency; there is nothing useless or purposeless on board; everything is to make navigation easy or possible; but as for the navigator for whom you claim the management of this vast ship, he and his crew show no reason or appropriateness in any of their arrange-

[1] Homer, Iliad viii. 24.

ments; the forestays, as likely as not, are made fast to the stern, and both sheets to the bows; the anchor will be gold, the beak lead, decoration below the water-line, and unsightliness above.

As for the men, you will find some lazy awkward coward in second or third command, or a fine swimmer, active as a cat aloft, and a handy man generally, chosen out of all the rest to—pump. It is just the same with the passengers: here is a gaol-bird accommodated with a seat next the captain and treated with reverence, there a debauchee or parricide or temple-robber in honourable possession of the best place, while crowds of respectable people are packed together in a corner and hustled by their real inferiors. Consider what sort of a voyage Socrates and Aristides and Phocion had of it, on short rations, not venturing, for the filth, to stretch out their legs on the bare deck; and on the other hand, what a comfortable, luxurious, contemptuous life it was for Callias or Midias or Sardanapalus.

That is how things go on board your ship, sir wiseacre; and who shall count the wrecks? If there had been a captain supervising and directing, in the first place he would have known the difference between good and bad passengers, and in the second he would have given them their deserts; the better would have had the better accommodation above by his side, and the worse gone below; with some of the better he would have shared his meals and his counsels. So, too, for the crew: the keen sailor would have been made look-out man or captain of the watch, or given some sort of precedence, and the lazy shirker have tasted the rope's-end half a dozen times a day. The metaphorical ship, your worship, is likely to be capsized by its captain's incompetence.

(*Momus.* He is sweeping on to victory, with wind and tide.

Zeus. Too probable, Momus. And Timocles never gets hold of an effective idea; he can only ladle out trite commonplaces higgledy-piggledy—no sooner heard than refuted.)

Timocles. Well, well; my ship leaves you unconvinced; I must drop my sheet-anchor then; that at least is unbreakable.

(*Zeus.* I wonder what it is.)

Timocles. See whether this is a sound syllogism; can you upset it? If there are altars, there are Gods: there *are* altars; therefore there are Gods.[1] Now then.

Damis. Ha, ha, ha! I will answer as soon as I can get done with laughing.

Timocles. Will you never stop? At least tell me what the joke is.

Damis. Why, you don't see that your anchor (sheet-anchor too) hangs by a mere thread. You depend on connexion between the existence of Gods and the existence of altars, and fancy yourself safe at anchor! As you admit that this was your sheet-anchor, there is nothing further to detain us.

Timocles. You retire; you confess yourself beaten then?

Damis. Yes; we have seen you take sanctuary at the altars under persecution. At those altars I am ready (the sheet-anchor be my witness) to swear peace and cease from strife.

Timocles. You are playing with me, are you, you vile body-snatcher, you loathsome, well-whipped scum! As if we didn't know who your father was, how your mother was a harlot! You strangled your own brother, you live

[1] See p. 3.

in fornication, you debauch the young, you unabashed lecher! Don't be in such a hurry; here is something for you to take with you; this broken pot will serve me to cut your foul throat.

Zeus. Damis makes off with a laugh, and the other after him, calling him names, mad at his insolence. He will get him on the head with that pottery, I know. And now, what are we to do?

Hermes. Why, the man in the comedy was not far out:

Put a good face on't, and thou hast no harm.

It is no such terrible disaster if a few people go away infected. There are plenty who take the other view—a majority of Greeks, the body and dregs of the people, and the barbarians to a man.

Zeus. Ah, Hermes, but there is a great deal in Darius's remark about Zopyrus—I would rather have had one ally like Damis than be the lord of a thousand Babylons.

Mythology and Public Opinion

From PHILOPSEUDES ("The Lover of Lies" or "The Liar").

Philocles, what *is* it that makes most men so fond of a lie? Can you explain it? Their delight in romancing themselves is only equalled by the earnest attention with which they receive other people's efforts in the same direction. . . . Poets, I suppose, will be poets. But when it comes to national lies, when one finds whole cities bouncing collectively like one man, how is one to keep one's countenance? A Cretan will look you in the face, and tell you that yonder is Zeus's tomb. In Athens, you are informed that Erichthonius sprang out of the Earth, and that the first Athenians grew up from the soil like so many cabbages; and this story assumes quite

a sober aspect when compared with that of the Sparti, for whom the Thebans claim descent from a dragon's teeth. If you presume to doubt these stories, if you choose to exert your commonsense, and leave Triptolemus's winged aerial car, and Pan's Marathonian exploits, and Orithyia's mishap, to the stronger digestions of a Coroebus and a Margites, you are a fool and a blasphemer, for questioning such palpable truths.

A New Phenomenon in Religion

From LUCIAN'S sketch of a notorious adventurer of the time, Peregrinus, nicknamed Proteus, who had a very variegated career: this incident is of special interest.

It was now that he came across the priests and scribes of the Christians in Palestine, and picked up their queer creed. I can tell you, he pretty soon convinced them of his superiority; prophet, elder, ruler of the Synagogue —he was everything at once; expounded their books, commented on them, wrote books himself. They took him for a God, accepted his laws, and declared him their president. The Christians, you know, worship a *man* to this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. Well, the end of it was that Proteus was arrested and thrown into prison. This was the very thing to lend an air to his favourite arts of clap-trap and wonder-working: he was now a made man. The Christians took it all very seriously: he was no sooner in prison than they began trying every means to get him out again—but without success. Everything else that could be done for him they most devoutly did. They thought of nothing else. Orphans and ancient widows might be seen hanging about the prison from break of day. Their officials bribed the

gaolers to let them sleep inside with him. Elegant dinners were conveyed in; their sacred writings were read; and our old friend Peregrine (as he was still called in those days) became for them "the modern Socrates." In some of the Asiatic cities, too, the Christian communities put themselves to the expense of sending deputations, with offers of sympathy, assistance, and legal advice. The activity of these people, in dealing with any matter that affects their community, is something extraordinary; they spare no trouble, no expense. Peregrine, all this time, was making quite an income on the strength of his bondage; money came pouring in. You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed upon them by their original law-giver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on trust, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property. Now an adroit, unscrupulous fellow, who has seen the world, has only to get among these simple souls, and his fortune is pretty soon made; he plays with them.

XV. THE HERMETIC WRITINGS

In the first centuries of the Christian era, as we have seen, a conception of the origin and nature of the universe, of God and the divine element in man, of the antithesis of Mind and Stuff, and of a salvation which man could find by freeing himself from the bodily senses and attaining union with God, had become very general. This view of the universe was drawn mainly from Plato—a popular amalgam of Platonism and Stoicism, which Posidonius probably had done a good deal to formulate. But very many men at that time could not rest in such a view unless they could receive it as given by supernatural revelation, and a revelation which came down from mysterious antiquity seemed to them of especial authority. The demand was met by people who put forth writings in Greek which they pretended were translated from ancient secret books of the Egyptians. In the Egyptian religion the ibis-headed god Thoth was the scribe of the gods, the inventor of writing and first master of wisdom. The Greeks who gave the names of their own gods to the Egyptian gods, called Thoth Hermes. The books now fabricated in Greek (probably at Alexandria) as taken from Egyptian were ordinarily in the form of communications made by "Hermes" to his sons Tat and Asklepios. Tat is simply a way of writing Thoth, so that the original god Thoth-Hermes has become reduplicated, a father being constructed out of his Greek name and a son out of his Egyptian name. Asklepios was the name given by the Greeks to an ancient Egyptian sage, Imhotep, who had been deified in Ptolemaic times. The epithet Trismegistos, "Thrice-greatest," was attached in these writings to Hermes in accordance with an Egyptian formula often applied to gods. The writings must have circulated in special circles who cultivated this Hermetic lore. No doubt many believed that they really were translated from ancient Egyptian books, and if their fabrication was, from our point of view, a pious fraud, one must remember that both Jews and Christians often accepted apocryphal books attributed to prophets in remote antiquity, like the Book of Enoch, composed in the last two centuries B.C., which the Epistle of St. Jude quotes as being really the words of the "seventh from Adam." In the substance of the Hermetic literature, so far as we can judge from the extant remains, there was very little Egyptian except the names. The doctrines are almost entirely Platonic and Stoic. One could get as little idea from them of the real Egyptian religion as one could get from

Philo of the Hebrew Old Testament. In some of the tracts included in the Hermetic Corpus the influence of the Jewish scriptures (through the Septuagint) is very distinct, but there is no evidence of Christian influence. The Hermetic Corpus is a collection of eighteen tracts: besides this we have numerous fragments of other Hermetic books in Stobaeus, and a Latin translation of three other tracts under the title *Asclepius*. The text of all these has recently been edited for the Oxford University Press by the late Mr. Walter Scott, with great learning but too masterful a rearrangement of the Greek where the text of our MSS. is difficult or confused. An earlier translation of the Hermetic literature was published in 1906 by Mr. G. R. S. Mead, *Thrice Greatest Hermes*.

The following extracts are from Mr. Walter Scott's translation:

Tat experiences Rebirth

Corpus Hermeticum xiii. 1–11. The language of this tract shows a striking resemblance to Christian language about regeneration. But it would probably be a mistake to see any influence of Christianity here. The idea of rebirth might well arise independently out of Platonic presuppositions, combined with real experience of the mystical ecstasy, which was interpreted as the divine element in man winning unity with the Divine Being in the universe, so that the man felt his conscious life to be no longer his own, but the life of God. It is further to be noted that the similarity of language covers a great difference in meaning. For Christianity, which stands upon the Hebrew foundation, rebirth is essentially a new direction of the active will; for the Hermetist, it is a supersession of the old mode of bodily sense-perception by a new kind of perception and knowledge, intellectual rather than moral.

Tat. In your general discourses, father, you spoke in riddles, and did not make your meaning clear, when you were discussing the divinity of man. You said that no one can be saved until he is born again; but you did not make known to me what you meant by this. . . . I know not, Thrice-greatest One, from what womb a man can be born again, nor from what seed.

Hermes. My son, the womb is Wisdom, conceiving in Silence; and the seed is the True Good.

Tat. And who is it, father, that begets? I am wholly at a loss.

Hermes. The Will of God, my son, is the begetter.

Tat. Tell me this too; who is the ministrant by whom the consummation of the Rebirth is brought to pass?

Hermes. Some man who is a son of God, working in subordination to God's will.

Tat. And what manner of man is he that is brought into being by the Rebirth?

Hermes. He that is born by that birth is another; he is a god, and son of God. He is the All, and is in all; for he has no part in corporeal substance; he partakes of the substance of things Intelligential,[1] being wholly composed of Powers of God.

Tat. Your words are riddles, father. . . . Explain to me what manner of thing the Rebirth is.

Hermes. What can I say, my son? This thing cannot be taught; and it is not possible for you to see it with your organs of sight, which are fashioned out of material elements. I can tell you nothing but this: I see that by God's mercy there has come to be in me a Form which is not fashioned out of matter, and I have passed forth out of myself, and entered into an immortal body. I am not now the man I was; I have been born again in *Nous*, and the bodily shape which was mine before has been put away from me. I am no longer an object coloured and tangible, a thing of spatial dimensions; I am now alien to all this, and to all that you perceive when you gaze with bodily eyesight. To such eyes as yours, my son, I am not now visible.

[1] Pertaining to *Nous*, Mind or Spirit, not corporeal. Mr. Scott translates "Intelligible": I have substituted Mr. Stephen Mackenna's word in his translation of Plotinus, "Intelligential," as less liable to be misunderstood.

Tat. Father, you have driven me to raving madness. Will you tell me that I do not at this moment see my own self?

Hermes. Would that you too, my son, had passed forth out of yourself, so that you might have seen, not as men see dream-figures in their sleep, but as one who is awake.

Tat. Now indeed, father, you have reduced me to speechless amazement. Why I see you, father, with your stature unchanged, and your features the same as ever.

Hermes. Even in this you are mistaken. The mortal form changes day by day; it is altered by lapse of time, and becomes larger and smaller; for it is an illusion.

Tat. What then is real, Thrice-greatest One?

Hermes. That which is not sullied by matter, my son, nor limited by boundaries, that which has no colour and no shape, that which is without integument, and is luminous, that which is apprehended by itself alone, that which is changeless and unalterable, that which is good. . . .

How can you perceive by mere sense a thing of other nature . . ., a thing which can be apprehended only by divine power, and demands one who has power to apprehend the incorporeal?

Tat. Is it then beyond my power, father?

Hermes. Heaven forbid, my son. Draw it into you, and it will come; will it, and it comes to be. Stop the working of your bodily senses, and then will deity be born in you. But if you would be born again, you must cleanse yourself from the irrational torments of matter.

Tat. What, father, have I torturers within me?

Hermes. Yes, my son, and not a few; they are terrible and they are many.

Tat. I do not know them, father.

Hermes. This very ignorance, my son, is one of the torments. . . . There are many others also, my son; and by means of the senses they force the man who is bound in the prison of the body to suffer what they inflict. But when God has had mercy on a man, they depart from him together, one and all. And then is Reason (the *Logos*) built up in him. Such is the manner of the Rebirth.

And now, my son, speak not, but keep solemn silence; so will the mercy come down on us from God.

Rejoice now, my son. You are being cleansed by the Powers of God; for they have come to build up in you the body of the Logos.

The knowledge of God has come to us; and at its coming, my son, ignorance has been driven out. Truth has come to us, and on it has followed the Good, with Life and Light. No longer has there come upon us any of the torments of darkness. They have flown away with rushing wings. Thus, my son, has the Intelligential[1] Being been made up in us; and by its coming to be, we have been made gods. Whoever then has, by God's mercy, attained to this divine birth, abandons bodily sense: he knows himself to be composed of Powers of God, and, knowing this, is glad.

Tat. Father, God has made me a new being! I perceive things now, not with bodily eyesight, but by the working of *Nous*.

Hermes. Even so it is, my son, when a man is born again; it is no longer body of three dimensions that he perceives, but the incorporeal.

Tat. Father, now I see in *Nous*, I see myself to be

[1] Here, too, I have changed Mr. Scott's word "Intellectual" for *noëra ousia*.

the All. I am in heaven and in earth, in water and in air; I am in beasts and plants; I am a babe in the womb, and one that is not conceived, and one that has been born. I am present everywhere.

Hermes. Now, my son, you know what the Rebirth is.

The Theory of Idolatry

ASCLEPIUS iii. 23b–24a; 37–38a.

Hermes Trismegistus. Now that the topic of men's kinship and association with the gods has been introduced, let me tell you, Asklepios, how great is the power and might of man. Even as the Master and Father, or, to call him by his highest name, even as God is the Maker of the gods of heaven, so man is the fashioner of the gods who dwell in temples and are content to have men for their neighbours. Thus man not only receives the light of divine life, but gives it also; he not only makes his way upward to God, but he even fashions gods. . . . As to the celestial gods, it is admitted by all men that they are manifestly generated from the purest part of matter, and that their astral forms are heads, as it were, and heads alone, in the place of bodily frames.[1] But the gods whose shapes are fashioned by mankind are made of both substances, that is, of the divine substance, which is purer and far nobler, and the substance which is lower than man, namely, the material of which they are wrought; and they are fashioned not in the shape of a head alone, but in the shape of a body with all its members. Mankind is ever mindful of its own parentage

[1] Their "astral forms" (as Mr. Scott translates *signa*) means the forms which they have, literally, as *stars*. The heavenly bodies are the gods in question, and they are spherical in shape, like the human head.

and the source whence it has sprung, and steadfastly persists in following God's example; and consequently, just as the Father and Master made the gods of heaven eternal, that they might resemble him who made them, even so do men also fashion their gods in the likeness of their own aspect.

Asklepios. Do you mean statues, Trismegistus?

Hermes. Yes, Asklepios. See how even you give way to doubt! I mean statues, but statues living and conscious, filled with the breath of life, and doing many mighty works; statues which have foreknowledge, and predict future events by the drawing of lots, and by prophetic inspiration, and by dreams, and in many other ways; statues which inflict diseases and heal them, dispensing sorrow and joy according to men's deserts. . . .

Our ancestors were at first far astray from the truth about the gods; they had no belief in them, and gave no heed to worship and religion. But afterwards they invented the art of making gods out of some material substance suited for the purpose. And to this invention they added a supernatural force whereby the images might have power to work good or hurt, and combined it with the material substance; that is to say, being unable to make souls, they invoked the souls of daemons, and implanted them in the statues by means of certain holy and sacred rites. We have an instance in your grandfather,[1] Asklepios, who was the first inventor of the art of healing, and to whom a temple has been dedicated in the Libyan mountain, near the shore of crocodiles. . . And Isis too, the wife of Osiris—do we not know how many boons she confers when she is gracious, and

[1] The Egyptian Imhotep, in the Greek form of his name, Imūthēs.

how many men she harms when she is angry? For terrestrial and material gods are easily provoked to anger, inasmuch as they are made and put together by men out of both kinds of substance. . . .

Asklepios. And these gods who are called "terrestrial," Trismegistus, by what means are they induced to take up their abode among us?

Hermes. They are induced, Asklepios, by means of herbs and stones and scents which have in them something divine. And would you know why frequent sacrifices are offered to do them pleasure, with hymns and praises and concord of sweet sounds that imitate heaven's harmony? These things are done to the end that, gladdened by oft-repeated worship, the heavenly beings who have been enticed into the images may continue through long ages to acquiesce in the companionship of men. Thus it is that man makes gods.

XVI. GNOSTICISM

The Teaching of Valentinus

The name "Gnosticism" is given to all those different theories of the universe which professed to be Christian, but amalgamated elements of Christian belief with Hellenistic ideas regarding an intermediate world of superhuman beings between the Supreme One and men, and regarding the human soul as a part of the Divine which had fallen into the dark and evil world of Matter. Each Gnostic sect claimed to have a special "knowledge" (*gnōsis*) to communicate, by which the Soul could get deliverance from matter and win its way back to the Upper World. Most of the Gnostics were strongly anti-Jewish, and represented the God of the Old Testament as an inferior Being, often a Being hostile to the Supreme God, ruling in the lower world, from which "knowledge" enabled the Soul to escape. Valentinus, probably an Egyptian Greek, set up a school in Rome about 140: amongst the various forms of Gnosticism, his system is one of those which incorporated most of the Greek philosophical tradition.

The Supreme Powers

Irenaeus I. 1.

They [the Valentinians] teach as follows: In the invisible, unnamable altitudes there is a Perfect *Aiōn* [that is, in the Gnostic terminology, a superhuman Being], existing before all things, whom they call the Fore-Father and the Abyss (*Bythos*). Nothing can contain him: he is invisible, eternal, unbegotten, abiding through infinite ages in absolute tranquillity and stillness. Co-existent with him is Thought (*Ennoia*), whom they also call Grace and Silence. At a certain moment the Abyss took thought to project from himself the first principle of the universe, and to deposit this projection in the co-existent Being, Silence, as it were seed in the womb.

And Silence, made pregnant with this seed, gave birth to Mind (*Nous*), like and equal to the Begetter, and alone able to comprehend the greatness of the Father. And this Mind they also call the Only-Begotten, being the Father and First Principle of the universe. Together with him there was projected Truth. These four form the first originating Quaternion of Pythagoras, called the Root of the universe—Bythos, Silence, Mind, Truth. Then this Only-Begotten, understanding the purport of his own projection, projected in his turn Logos and Life, being himself the Father of all subsequent beings, the First Principle and Formative Principle of the whole Plerōma [the full complement of divine beings]. From Logos and Life were next projected by copulation Anthropos [the heavenly "Man"] and Ecclesia [the heavenly "Church"]; and the eight we now have are the originating Ogdoad, the Root and Substance of the universe. Each pair is male and female, the Fore-Father copulating with his own (female) Thought, the Only-Begotten, Mind, with Truth; the Logos with Life, and the Man with Ecclesia.

These Aions, projected to the glory of the Father, desired to glorify the Father on their own account, and so projected further beings by way of copulation. Logos and Life, after having projected Anthropos and Ecclesia, projected another ten Aions—Abysmal (*Bythios*) and Mixture, Unaging and Union, Self-grown and Pleasure, Immovable and Composition, Only-begotten (?) and Blessed. These are the ten Aions projected from Logos and Life. Anthropos and Ecclesia also projected twelve Aions—Paraclete and Faith, Paternal and Hope, Maternal and Love, Mind-eternal and Understanding, Ecclesiastic and Blessedness, Will-endowed and Wisdom.

These are the Thirty Aions of their false doctrine—the invisible and spiritual Pleroma, as they call it, with three divisions, the Eight-group (Ogdoad), the Ten-group (Decad) and the Twelve-group (the Dodecad).

The Fall and Restoration of Achamoth

IRENAEUS i. 4.

The Concept of the Heavenly Wisdom—this Concept they call Achamoth [1]—having become separated from the Pleroma with her passion, was left stranded in shadowy and empty regions, as indeed she was bound to be, since she had become excluded from the Light and the Pleroma, a thing without form or shape, like an abortion, because she had failed to apprehend anything [of the things she desired]. And the Christ had compassion on her, and having been stretched out towards her through Stauros [the Cross, but here equivalent to the superhuman Being, called Horos,[2] Boundary [3]] he by his own power gave her form—but so far form only in respect of *nature*, not form in respect of knowledge. Having done this, he sped back, contracting his power, and left her alone, in order that through a sense of her suffering, by reason of her departure from the Pleroma, she might yearn after the higher things, having a faint fragrance of immortality left in her by the Christ and by the Holy Spirit. . . . Now she had received form

[1] From the Hebrew word for "Wisdom," *Chokmōth*.

[2] *Hŏros*, not to be confounded with the Egyptian god *Hōrus*.

[3] Stauros marks the boundary between the Pleroma and the dark world, where Achamoth lies forlorn. The Christ, within the upper world, got himself stretched out through the Boundary, so that he could come to Achamoth's help. At the same time the phrase is intended to have a mystic connexion with the Christian phrase "stretched out upon the Cross."

and was come to her right mind, but whereas immediately after she had been left emptied of the invisible Logos which had been with her, to wit, of Christ, she set out in search of the Light which had deserted her, but she was not able to apprehend it because Boundary (Horos) stood in the way. . . . Since she could not make her way through Boundary, because of the passion wherein she was entangled, and was left forlorn outside, she fell a prey to all the varieties of passion—to grief, because she had not apprehended; to fear, lest life should desert her, as light had deserted her. Bewilderment seized her, everything was whelmed for her in a blankness of ignorance. She did not, like her mother the First Wisdom, exhibit differentiation only in her passions, but actual antagonism. And then another mood came over her—the mood of turning to him who had made her live.

This turning, they say, was the solidifying and constitution of the Stuff, of which this kosmos consists. From this her turning the whole Soul of the kosmos, of the Demiurge,[1] came into being; other things had their origin from her fear and her grief. All the watery element was produced from her tears; all the luminous element from her laughter; the solid elements of the kosmos from her grief and stupefaction. For at one moment, they say, she wept and lamented, because she was left alone in the Dark and the Emptiness; at another moment, she thought on the Light which had left her, and then she was happy and broke into laughing. Then again she fell into fear; and then into perplexity and amazement. . . .

When therefore their Mother, they say, had passed through the whole range of the passions and had scarcely

[1] The inferior being, the Maker of the material world, often identified by the Gnostics with the God of the Old Testament.

raised her head above them, she addressed herself in supplication to the Light which had left her, that is to say, the Christ. He had returned up to the Pleroma, and, because he shrank, I suppose, from coming down a second time himself,[1] he sent forth to her the Paraclete, that is to say the Saviour [Jesus], and the Father committed unto him all power and set him in authority over all, and the other Aions likewise yielded him their powers [2] in order that in him all things might be created, things visible and things invisible, thrones, divinities, dominions. So the Paraclete was sent forth to her together with the angels his equals in age. And Achamoth, they say, at first felt shame at his coming and put on a veil from modesty, but afterwards when she beheld him himself, she ran to meet him with the whole of her faculties, having received power from his appearance. And he gave her form, form now in respect of *knowledge*, and healed her of her passions. Yet he could not separate them from her altogether and take them away (as the passions of the Higher Wisdom had been taken away) because by now they had strong hold upon her. Yet with her too there was a separation: her incorporeal passion was changed into incorporeal Stuff. This Stuff became condensed in bodies, and two kinds of substance came into being, an inferior substance out of her passions, and a substance capable [incapable?] of passion out of her conversion. All this was wrought by the fashioning power of the Saviour.[3]

[1] Of course, thrown in ironically by St. Irenaeus, from whose account of the Valentinian doctrine this comes.

[2] The text is here doubtful, the sense of the original may have been that the Father had given the Saviour authority over the other Aions.

[3] The Greek of the last three sentences is corrupt and unintelligible as it stands. I have translated what Baur supposed the general sense to have originally been.

Now was Achamoth become free from passion, and in her joy she conceived the vision of the lights which were in him, that is to say, the angels his companions, and she became pregnant by them—so they teach—and bare the fruits according to the [divine] image, a spiritual offspring, born after the likeness of the satellites of the Saviour.

XVII. NEOPLATONISM

(1) Plotinus

Plotinus was probably by origin an Egyptian Greek, born early in the third century, A.D. He settled about A.D. 250 in Rome, and died in 270, in Italy.

The extracts from Porphry's "Life of Plotinus," except the translation of the oracle, and all the extracts except the last from Plotinus's own writings, are taken from the translation by Mr. Stephen Mackenna (Medici Society, Grafton Street, London).

Porphyry on Plotinus

Life of Plotinus 10.

Among those making profession of Philosophy at Rome was one Olympius, an Alexandrian, who had been for a little while a pupil of Ammonius [the teacher of Plotinus]. This man's jealous envy showed itself in continual insolence, and finally he grew so bitter that he even ventured sorcery, seeking to crush Plotinus by star-spells. But he found his experiments recoiling on himself, and he confessed to his associates that Plotinus possessed "a mighty soul, so powerful as to be able to hurl every assault back upon those that sought his ruin." Plotinus had felt the operation and declared that at that moment Olympius's "limbs were convulsed and his body shrivelling like a money-bag pulled tight." Olympius, perceiving on several attempts that he was endangering himself rather than Plotinus, desisted.

In fact Plotinus possessed by birth something more than is accorded to other men. An Egyptian priest who had arrived in Rome and, through some friend, had

been presented to the philosopher, became desirous of displaying his powers to him, and he offered to evoke a visible manifestation of Plotinus's presiding spirit. Plotinus readily consented and the evocation was made in the Temple of Isis, the only place, they say, which the Egyptian could find pure in Rome.

At the summons a Divinity appeared, not a being of the order of daemons[1], and the Egyptian exclaimed: "You are singularly graced; the guiding spirit within you is none of the lower degree but a God!" It was not possible, however, to interrogate or even to contemplate this God any further, for the priest's assistant, who had been holding the birds to prevent them flying away, strangled them, whether through jealousy or in terror. Thus Plotinus had for indwelling spirit a Being of the more divine degree, and he kept his own divine spirit unceasingly intent upon that inner presence. It was this preoccupation that led him to write his treatise upon *Our Tutelary Daemon*, an essay in the explanation of the differences among spirit-guides.

Supposed Oracle about Plotinus

Porphyry says that this oracle was given at Delphi to Plotinus's disciple Amelius. Geffcken (*Zwei griechische Apologeten*, p. 247) gives reasons for thinking it was actually composed by Amelius himself.

> Pure spirit—once a man—pure spirits now
> Greet thee rejoicing, and of these art thou;
> Not vainly was thy whole soul alway bent
> With one same battle and one same intent

[1] Mr. Mackenna has "a being of the spirit-ranks," and lower down "Our Tutelary Spirit." I have ventured in both cases to change his word, as δαίμων has elsewhere in this book been transcribed as 'daemon,' and it is desirable to show in these extracts the continuity of the Greek philosophical tradition.

Through eddying cloud and earth's bewildering roar
To win her bright way to that stainless shore.
Aye, mid the salt spume of this troublous sea,
This death in life, this sick perplexity,
Oft on thy struggle through the obscure unrest
A revelation open'd from the Blest—
Show'd close at hand the goal thy hope would win,
Heaven's kingdom round thee, and thy God within.
So sure a help the eternal Guardians gave,
From life's confusion so were strong to save,
Upheld thy wandering steps that sought the day
And set them steadfast on the heavenly way.
Nor quite even here on thy broad brows was shed
The sleep which shrouds the living, who are dead;
Once, by God's grace, was from thine eyes unfurl'd
This veil that screens the immense and whirling world.
Once, while the spheres around thee in music ran,
Was Very Beauty manifest to man—
Ah, once to have seen her, once to have known her there,
For speech too sweet, for earth too heavenly fair!
But now the tomb where long thy soul had lain
Bursts, and thy tabernacle is rent in twain;
Now from about thee, in thy new home above,
Has perish'd all but life, and all but love—
And on all lives, and on all loves, outpour'd,
Free grace and full, a spirit from the Lord,
High in that heaven whose windless vaults enfold
Just men made perfect, and an age all gold.
Thine own Pythagoras is with thee there,
And sacred Plato in that sacred air,
And whoso follow'd, and all high hearts that knew
In death's despite what deathless Love can do.
To God's right hand they have scaled the starry way—

Pure spirits these, thy spirit pure as they.
Ah, saint! how many and many an anguish past,
To how fair haven art thou come at last!
On thy meek head what Powers their blessing pour,
Fill'd full with life, and rich for evermore!

Translated by F. W. H. Myers, *Hellenica*, pp. 488, 489.

The Ecstasies of Plotinus

Life of Plotinus 23.

Good and kindly, singularly gentle and engaging: thus the oracle presents him, and so in fact we found him. Sleeplessly alert—Apollo tells—pure of soul, ever striving towards the divine which he loved with all his being, he laboured strenuously to free himself and rise above the bitter waves of this blood-drenched life: and this is why to Plotinus—God-like and lifting himself often, by the ways of meditation and by the methods Plato teaches in the *Banquet*, to the first and all-transcendent God—that God appeared, the God throned above the Intellectual Principle (*Nous*) and all the Intellectual Sphere. "There was shown to Plotinus the Term ever near" [1]: for the term, the one end, of his life was to become Uniate, to approach to the God over all: and four times, during the period I passed with him, he achieved this term, by no mere latent fitness but by the ineffable act. To this God, I also declare, I Porphyry, that in my sixty-eighth year I too was once admitted and entered into Union. . . .

Thus far the Oracle recounts what Plotinus accom-

[1] In Myers's translation just given:
"Show'd close at hand the goal thy hope would win."

plished and to what heights he attained while still in the body: emancipated from the body [at death] we are told how he entered the celestial circle, where all is friendship, tender delight, happiness and loving union with God, where Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, the sons of God, are enthroned as judges of souls—not, however, to hold him to judgment but as welcoming him to their consort to which are bidden spirits pleasing to the Gods—Plato, Pythagoras, and all the people of the choir of immortal love, there where the blessed spirits have their birth-home and live in days made happy by the Gods.

The Series of Emanations

PLOTINUS, *Ennead* V. 2. 1.

The One is all things and no one of them; the source of all things is not all things; all things are its possession—running back, so to speak, to it—or, more correctly, not yet so, they will be.

But a universe from an unbroken unity, in which there appears no diversity, not even duality?

It is precisely because there is nothing within the One that all things are from it: in order that Being may be brought about the source must be no Being but Being's generator, in what is to be thought of as the primal act of generation. Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect, and, in our metaphor, has overflowed, and its exuberance has produced the new: this product has turned again to its begetter and been filled and has become its contemplator and so a *Nous* [Mind].[1]

[1] Mr. Mackenna translates "Intellectual-Principle." The Greek word νοῦς does not, of course, correspond exactly with any

That station towards the One (the fact that something exists in the presence of the One) establishes Being; that vision directed upon the One establishes *Nous*; standing towards the One to the end of vision, it is simultaneously *Nous* and Being; and, attaining resemblance in virtue of this vision, it repeats the act of the One in pouring forth a vast power.

This second overflow is a Form or Idea representing the Divine *Nous*, as the Divine *Nous* represented its own prior, the One. This active power sprung from Essence (from the *Nous* considered as Being) is Soul (*Psyche*).

Soul arises as the idea and act of the motionless *Nous*—which itself sprang from its own motionless prior—but the Soul's operation is not similarly motionless; its image is generated from its movement. It takes fullness by looking to its source; but it generates its image by adopting another, a downward, movement.

This image of Soul is Sense and Nature, the vegetal principle.

Nothing, however, is completely severed from its prior. Thus the human Soul appears to reach away as far down as the vegetal order; in some sense it does, since the life of growing things is within its province; but it is not present entire; when it has reached the vegetal order it is there in the sense that having moved thus far downwards it produces—by its outgoing and its tendency towards the less good—another hypostasis or form of being just as its prior (the loftier phase of the Soul) is

English one, but it was a word of common Greek, whereas "Intellectual-Principle" is a rather cumbrous philosophical locution. I have in this book translated *νοῦς* "Mind" (as in the English New Testament), or simply transliterated the Greek. Dr. Inge translates the word by "Spirit," but I doubt whether it is possible to keep off the wrong associations which that word would bring.

produced from *Nous*, which yet remains in untroubled possession.

The Problem of Evil

ENNEAD III. 2. 16, 17.

But if all this is true, what room is left for evil? Where are we to place wrong-doing and sin?

How explain that in a world organised in good, the efficient agents (human beings) behave unjustly, commit sin? And how comes misery if neither sin nor injustice exists?

Again, if all our action is determined by a natural process, how can the distinction be maintained between behaviour in accordance with nature and behaviour in conflict with it?

And what becomes of blasphemy against the divine? The blasphemer is made what he is: a dramatist has written a part insulting and maligning himself and given it to an actor to play.

These considerations oblige us to state the Logos (the Reason-Principle of the Universe) once again, and more clearly, and to justify its nature.

This Reason-Principle, then—let us dare the definition in the hope of conveying the truth—this Logos is not the *Nous* unmingled, not the Absolute Divine Intellect; nor does it descend from the pure Soul alone: it is a dependent of that Soul while, in a sense, it is a radiation from both those divine Hypostases: the *Nous* and the Soul—the Soul as conditioned by the *Nous*, engender this Logos, which is a Life holding restfully a certain measure of Reason.

Now all life, even the least valuable, is an activity, and not a blind activity like that of flame; even where

there is not sensation the activity of life is no mere haphazard play of Movement: any object in which life is present, any object which participates in Life, is at once enreasoned in the sense that the activity peculiar to life is formative, shaping as it moves.

Life, then, aims at pattern as does the pantomimic dancer with his set movements; the mime, in himself, represents life, and, besides, his movements proceed in obedience to a pattern designed to symbolise life.

Thus far to give us some idea of the nature of Life in general.

But this Reason-Principle which emanates from the complete unity, divine Mind, and the complete unity, Life (= Soul), is neither a uniate complete Life nor a uniate complete divine Mind, nor does it give itself whole and all-including to its subject. [By an imperfect communication] it sets up a conflict of part against part: it produces imperfect things and so engenders and maintains war and attack, and thus its unity can be that only of a sum-total not of a thing undivided. At war with itself in the parts which it now exhibits, it has the unity, or harmony, of a drama torn with struggle. The drama, of course, brings the conflicting elements to one final harmony, weaving the entire story of the clashing characters into one thing: while in the Logos the conflict of the divergent elements rises within the one element, the Reason-Principle: the comparison, therefore, is rather with a harmony emerging directly from the conflicting elements themselves, and the question becomes, What introduces clashing elements among these Reason-Principles?

Now in the case of music, tones high and low are the product of Reason-Principles which, by the fact that they

are principles of harmony, meet in the unit of Harmony, the absolute Harmony, a more comprehensive Principle, greater than they and including them as its parts. Similarly in the Universe at large we find contraries—white and black, hot and cold, winged and wingless, footed and footless, reasoning and unreasoning—but all these elements are members of one living body, their sum-total; the Universe is a self-accordant entity, its members everywhere clashing, but the total being the manifestation of a Reason-Principle. That one Reason-Principle, then, must be the unification of conflicting Reason-Principles, whose very opposition is the support of its coherence and, almost, of its Being.

And indeed, if it were not multiple it could not be a Universal Principle, it could not even be at all a Reason-Principle; in the fact of its being a Reason-Principle is contained the fact of interior difference. Now the maximum of difference is contrariety; admitting that this differentiation exists and creates, it will create difference in the greatest and not in the least degree; in other words, the Reason-Principle, bringing about differentiation to the uttermost degree, will of necessity create contrarieties: it will be complete only by producing itself not merely in diverse things but in contrary things.

The nature of the Reason-Principle is adequately expressed in its Act, and, therefore, the wider its extension the nearer will its productions approach to full contrariety; hence the world of sense is less a unity than is its Reason-Principle; it contains a wider multiplicity and contrariety: its partial members will therefore be urged by a closer intention towards fullness of life, a warmer desire for unification.

But desire often destroys the desired; it seeks its own

good, and if the desired object is perishable, the ruin follows: and the partial thing (a human being, for example) straining towards its completing principle draws towards itself all it possibly can.

Thus, with the good we have the bad: we have the opposed movements of a dancer guided by one artistic plan; we recognise in his steps the good as against the bad, and see that in opposition lies the merit of the design.

But thus the wicked disappear? No: their wickedness remains; simply, their rôle is not of their own planning. But, surely, this excuses them? No; excuse lies with the Reason-Principle—and the Reason-Principle does not excuse them.

No doubt all are members of this Principle, but one is a good man, another is bad—the larger class, this—and it goes as in a play; the poet while he gives each actor a part is also using them as they are in their own persons: he does not himself rank the men as leading actor, second, third; he simply gives suitable words to each, and by that assignment fixes each man's standing.

Thus, every man has his place, a place that fits the good man, a place that fits the bad: each within the two orders of men makes his way, naturally, reasonably, to the place, good or bad, that suits him, and takes the position he has made his own. There he talks and acts, in blasphemy and crime or in all goodness: for the actors bring to this play what they were before it was ever staged.

In the dramas of human art, the poet provides the words but the actors add their own quality, good or bad—for they have more to do than merely repeat the author's words—in the truer drama, which dramatic genius imitates in its degree, the Soul displays itself in a part assigned by the creator of the piece.

As the actors of our stages get their masks and their costume, robes of state or rags, so a Soul is allotted its fortunes, and not at haphazard but always under a Reason: it adapts itself to the fortunes assigned to it, attunes itself, ranges itself rightly to the drama, to the whole Principle of the piece: then it speaks out its business, exhibiting at the same time all that a Soul can express of its own quality, as a singer in a song. A voice, a bearing, naturally fine or vulgar, may increase the charm of a piece; on the other hand, an actor with his ugly voice may make a sorry exhibition of himself, yet the drama stands as good a work as ever: the dramatist taking the action which a sound criticism suggests, disgraces one, taking his part from him, with perfect justice: another man he promotes to more serious rôles or to any more important play he may have, while the first is cast for whatever minor work there may be.

Just so the Soul, entering this drama of the Universe, making itself a part of the play, bringing to its acting its personal excellence or defect, set in a definite place at the entry and accepting from the author its entire rôle—superimposed upon its own character and conduct—just so, it receives in the end its punishment and reward.

But these actors, Souls, hold a peculiar dignity: they act in a vaster place than any stage: the Author has made them masters of all this world; they have a wide choice of place; they themselves determine the honour or discredit in which they are agents since their place and part are in keeping with their quality: they therefore fit into the Reason-Principle of the Universe, each adjusted, most legitimately, to the appropriate environment, as every string of the lyre is set in the precisely right position, determined by the Principle directing

musical utterance, for the due production of the tones within its capacity. All is just and good in the Universe in which every actor is set in his own quite appropriate place, though it be to utter in the Darkness and in Tartarus the dreadful sounds whose utterance there is well.

This Universe is good not when the individual is a stone, but when everyone throws in his own voice towards a total harmony, singing out a life—thin, harsh, imperfect though it be. The Syrinx does not utter merely one pure note; there is a thin, obscure sound which blends in to make the harmony of Syrinx music: the harmony is made up from tones of various grades, all the tones differing, but the resultant of all forming one sound.

Similarly the Reason-Principle entire is One, but it is broken into unequal parts: hence the difference of place found in the Universe, better spots and worse; and hence the inequality of Souls, finding their appropriate surroundings amid this local inequality. The diverse places of this sphere, the Souls of unequal grade and unlike conduct, are well exemplified by the distinction of parts in the Syrinx or any other instrument: there is local difference, but from every position every string gives forth its own tone, the sound appropriate, at once, to its particular place and to the entire plan.

What is evil in the single Soul will stand a good thing in the universal system; what in the unit offends nature will serve in the total event—and still remains the weak and wrong tone it is, though its sounding takes nothing from the work of the whole, just as, in another order of image, the executioner's ugly office does not mar the well-governed state: such an officer is a civic necessity;

and the corresponding moral type is often serviceable; thus, even as things are, all is well.

The Soul's Ascent and Return below

ENNEAD IV. 8. 1.

Many times it has happened: Lifted out of the body into myself; becoming external to all other things and self-encentred; beholding a marvellous beauty; then, more than ever, assured of community with the loftiest order; enacting the noblest life, acquiring identity with the divine; stationing within It by having attained that activity; poised above whatsoever within the Intelligential[1] is less than the Supreme: yet there comes the moment of descent from intellection to reasoning, and after that sojourn in the divine, I ask myself how it happens that I can now be descending, and how did the soul ever enter into my body, the soul which, even within the body, is the high thing it has shown itself to be.

The Return to the One

ENNEAD V. 1. 1.

What can it be that has brought the souls to forget the father, God, and, though members of the Divine and entirely of that world, to ignore at once themselves and It?

The evil that has overtaken them has its source in self-will, in the entry into the sphere of process, and in the primal differentiation with the desire for self-ownership. They conceived a pleasure in this freedom and largely indulged their own motion; thus they were hurried down the wrong path, and in the end, drifting farther

[1] Mr. Mackenna has here "Intellectual": I have substituted "Intelligential" for the sake of uniformity in this book.

and farther, they came to lose even the thought of their origin in the Divine. A child wrenched young from home and brought up during many years at a distance will fail in knowledge of its father and of itself: the souls, in the same way, no longer discern either the divinity or their own nature; ignorance of their rank brings self-depreciation; they misplace their respect, honouring everything more than themselves; all their awe and admiration is for the alien, and, clinging to this, they have broken apart, as far as a soul may, and they make light of what they have deserted; their regard for the mundane and their disregard of themselves bring about their utter ignoring of the divine.

Admiring pursuit of the external is a confession of inferiority; and nothing thus holding itself inferior to things that rise and perish, nothing counting itself less honourable and less enduring than all else it admires, could ever form any notion of either the nature or the power of God.

A double discipline must be applied if human beings in this pass are to be reclaimed, and brought back to their origins, lifted once more towards the Supreme and One and First.

Communion of the Soul with God

The translation which follows is from F. von Hügel's "Essays and Addresses," Second Series (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.).

ENNEAD VI. 9. 7 ff.

God, says Plato, is not far from every one of us, but is near to all, without their knowing it. It is they themselves who flee away from Him, or rather they flee away from their own true selves. Hence they cannot seize that

from which they have fled, and cannot, having destroyed their own true self, seek for another; as a child which has become insane, and has become beside itself, does not recognise its own father. But the man who has learnt to know himself, will also know whence he comes.

. . . . . .

Bodies are indeed impeded from communion [by intervening bodies]; but Things Bodiless are not separated from each other by [intervening] bodies; such Bodiless Things are not separated from each other by space, but by Otherness and Difference; when, then, such Otherness is absent, Bodiless Things are close to each other. The One, then, having no Otherness, is always present [to our soul]; but we are present only when we are free from Otherness. And the One does not strive after us, so as to be around us, but we strive after It, so as to be around It.

. . . . . .

We are not cut off from God or severed from Him, even if our bodily nature interferes and drags us away to itself, but we breathe and consist in Him, since God does not give and then withdraw, but He ever lifts and carries us, so long as He is what He is. . . . There too [in union with Him] the soul rests, after she has fled away from Evil to the place which is pure from evils. And the true Life is there; for the life here and without God is but a trace of life in imitation of that Life. . . The good of the soul is there [in that life with God], and a Longing Love (*Erōs*) is innate in the soul. For, since the soul is indeed other than God and yet from God, she loves and longs for Him of necessity; and, when she tarries there, she possesses Heavenly Love, whereas

[straying] here below, she becomes, as it were, a common courtesan (Aphrodite Pandemos).

. . . . .

Such a life of Gods and men is a liberation from all the fetters of this earthly life—a life without the pleasures which spring [for the earthly soul] from this earthly life —a flight of One to the One [*φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον*, "a flight of the Alone to the Alone," the final words in the writings of *Plotinus*, as arranged by Porphyry].

(2) Porphyry

Porphyrius, Plotinus's chief disciple, a citizen by birth of Tyre, born A.D. 232/3, died early in fourth century A.D. Of his numerous writings but few survive. He was undoubtedly a man of wide erudition and the first to apply "Higher Criticism" to the book of Daniel, which he declared, as modern critics do, to be a product of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Amongst his writings was one "Against the Christians." Christians afterwards regarded him as their chief literary antagonist.

Daemons Good and Bad

De Abstinentia ii. 36–43.

On my part there shall be no violation of the sacred silence in regard to the rest of the doctrine, but the things which certain Platonists have made public, those I may without offence put before intelligent readers, to make the subject now engaging us plain. And what they say is as follows. The First God, being without body, unmoving, without division, neither within anything else nor tied down within Himself, has no need, as has been said, of anything external, nor has the Soul of the World, which possesses by nature the quality of extension in space and the power of moving itself, but which yet is

so constituted as to choose rather to be moved in an orderly and fair way, and to move the Body of the World according to the best rational schemes. The Soul has received the Body into itself and embraced it round about, although the Soul is without body and immune from every kind of passion or disturbance. To the other gods—that is, to the kosmos, the fixed stars and the planets—which are *visible* gods composed of soul and body, we must express our thankfulness in return for their gifts in the way just specified, by the sacrifice of inanimate things. That still leaves us with the multitude of *invisible* gods, to whom Plato gave indiscriminately the name of *daemons*. Some of these have been given particular names by men, and amongst the various peoples severally receive divine honours and the usual forms of service; some, on the other hand, are, speaking generally, without proper names, though they may receive in an obscure way appellations and worship among small groups in this or that village or town. The remaining multitude is covered by the one common name of "*daemons*," and a conviction prevails regarding all of them, that they are capable of inflicting injury, if they are provoked to anger by men overlooking them or failing to pay them the customary service, whilst they are capable of doing good to those who win their friendliness by prayers and supplications and sacrifices and suchlike things. Now since men's conceptions about them have become confused and have led to grave scandal, it is essential to explain in so many words their distinctive nature.

It may be necessary, the Platonists in question say, to show clearly how the false opinion about these beings began among men. We must make distinctions

then in the following way. All those souls, born out of the World Soul, who govern large tracts in the region below the Moon, staying themselves upon the airy substance (*pneuma*), but ruling it according to reason, those souls, we must consider, are *good* daemons and all their activities are for the benefit of the persons and things under their rule, whether they have command over certain animals, or over particular fruits of the earth, or over the things which subserve animal and vegetable life—rain, moderate winds, fair weather, all the other things which work together with atmospheric changes, well-tempered seasons of the year—or whether they preside over arts and crafts, music, culture as a whole, gymnastics, medicine, and other things of that kind. It is impossible that these beings should bestow a supply of good things and at the same time ever be the authors of hurt. In this class, moreover, we must reckon the "conveyors" (*porthmeuontes*), as Plato calls them, those who carry communications from men to the gods and from the gods to men—bringing up our prayers to the gods, as judges, and bringing forth to us, with prophetic utterances, the admonitions and warnings of the gods.

On the contrary all the souls which do not rule the airy substance contiguous with their own, but are for the most part ruled by it, by this very substance are carried and driven about unhappily, whenever the rages and desires of the airy substance get impetus. These souls are also daemons, like the others, but they may be properly described as *maleficent* daemons. All daemons, both these latter and those whose power is of the opposite kind, are equally invisible, indeed not perceptible by any human sense. For they are not clothed with a solid body, nor do they all have the same form, but the forms, cast in a

great variety of figures, which give character to their airy substance, at one time manifest themselves, and at another time are unseen: daemons of the worser sort sometimes change from form to form.

The airy substance, in so far as it is material, is subject to disturbance and decay; but because it is bound fast by the souls in the way indicated, their specific form (*eidos*) lasts for a longer time. Yet it is not eternal. For it is reasonable to suppose that a process of minute wastage and change goes continually on. The form of the good daemons is in perfect proportion, as are the bodies in which they appear; the form of maleficent daemons is ill-proportioned, and these, giving way too much to that element in them which suffers disturbance and passion, try to do every conceivable kind of harm to the region round the earth. Since their temper as a whole is violent and treacherous, and they are destitute of that vigilant control afforded by the Higher Divinity, their assaults are, as a rule, impulsive and sudden, coming as a surprise. Sometimes they attempt concealment, sometimes violence. For which reason the passions they inspire are keen, and the process of healing and rectification, which comes from the better daemons, seems slow in comparison. For good, being always gentle and equable, proceeds by order, and does not leap the due stages.

If you hold these views, you will never fall into that most absurd of mistakes—to attribute in your thought the bad things to the good daemons and the good things to the bad daemons. Such a theory is absurd, not only in the way just indicated, but because the multitude lay hold of the worst suppositions about the gods and disseminate them generally amongst

mankind. We must indeed regard it as one of the gravest injuries which the maleficent daemons inflict, that, whilst they are themselves the authors of terrestrial disturbances—plagues, sterility, earthquakes, drought, and the like—they induce us to believe that the authors of these things are those from whom we receive things of the very opposite kind, and so shift the blame from themselves, making it their chief object to do evil without being found out. And after this they set us making supplications and sacrifices to the beneficent gods, as if those gods were angry!

These and other like things they do because they want to turn us away from right thought about the gods, and turn us to themselves. For whenever anything inappropriate and perverse of this kind is done, they rejoice, and masking themselves, as it were, in the persons of the other gods, they avail themselves of our foolishness, winning over the multitudes by inflaming the lusts of men through sexual passion, through the craving for riches and power and pleasure, or, it may be, through the vanity of prestige, the source of revolutions and wars and kindred things. But, what is most horrible, they use these things to raise themselves higher, and persuade men to associate similar things with the greatest gods, till they actually cast these imputations upon the Supreme God Himself, asserting that He "confounds the world and turns it upside down"![1] . . .

These evil daemons and their Chief are honoured especially by those who perpetrate evil by means of witchcraft. For the daemons we speak of are full of all kinds of glamour and are well able to deceive by wonder-working. By means of them ill-starred people

[1] Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 650.

(*kakodaimones*) prepare philtres and love-charms. For all lasciviousness and all following of riches and prestige is by their means, but, most especially, all deceit. Lying, indeed, belongs to their nature; for they desire to be gods, and the Power who is their Chief desires to be taken for the Supreme God. These it is who rejoice "in drink-offerings and the reek of sacrifice," by means of which their airy substance, their corporeal substance, waxes fat. For this substance lives on vapours and exhalations, undergoing changes according to its sustenance, and it is made strong by the reek of blood and flesh. For which reason a prudent and temperate man will take heed not to make use of such sacrifices as will draw these daemons upon him; he will be diligent to cleanse his soul in every way: for upon a clean soul they make no attack, because it is of another quality than they.

If, however, for political communities it is necessary to propitiate this kind of daemons as well, that is no concern of ours. To such communities, riches, external things, corporeal things have the rank of good things and their opposites of evil things; care for the soul has a very small place in their thoughts. But *we*, so far as may be, will not crave the things which these daemons can give; we use both the faculties of the soul and outside advantages to further our one supreme aim, to become like God and the beings associated with God—which is achieved by the elimination of passion, by an articulated belief about those things which alone have complete being and by a life in conformity with them—and to become unlike wicked men and daemons, in a word, every being which finds its pleasure in what is mortal and material. So we too shall offer sacrifice, but offer in the way Theophrastus has described. The masters of divine lore

have spoken to the same effect, knowing that in so far as we give ascendancy to the passions and so neglect the soul, to that extent we become joined to the Evil Power, and shall be under the necessity of propitiating that Power as well. For, as the masters of divine lore say, those who are tied and bound by outside things and have not yet conquered their passions are under the necessity of averting the Evil Power as well: if they do not, they will have trouble without end.

From Porphyry's Letter of Spiritual Counsel to his wife Marcella

The teaching tells us that the Deity is present everywhere and in all circumstances; that the temple which has been dedicated to Him by men is, in a special sense, the mind of the wise man alone; that the right kind of honour is paid to God by the man who has the most knowledge of God, and that such knowledge belongs to none save the wise man only, whose office it is to honour the Deity by wisdom and adorn for Him by wisdom a sanctuary in his thoughts, having for image therein, to glorify God withal, his spirit (*nous*), the living image of God which God has fashioned within him. . . . For God has no need of any man, and the wise man has no need of anyone but God. No one, indeed, can become a man of excellent quality save he who exercises his spirit upon the goodness and the beauty which is prominent in God, just as no one can become an unhappy man [*kakodaimon*, i.e. a man with a bad *daimon* or destiny] save he who has fitted his soul to be a dwelling-place for evil daemons. To the man who is wise God gives the power of a god. And

a man is purified by the thought of God, and if he ensue righteousness, he must take his start from God.

Let every way of life, let every work and word, have God present as overseer and witness. And for all the good things we do let us give credit to God: but for the bad things we do the blame is ours, in us who choose; God is blameless. For which reason, when we pray to God let our petitions be worthy of God. Let us ask of Him those things only which we could not get from anyone else. Those things in which the initiative belongs to virtuous effort, let us pray that they may be ours, after the due effort has been made; the prayer of the indolent man is vain speech. Things which you cannot retain when you have got them, for such things do not pray to God: because no gift of God can be taken away, so that what you will not retain He will not give. Those things therefore which you will no longer need, when you are rid of the body, make no account of: the things on the other hand which you will still need when you are rid of it, these things seek by self-training, beseeching God to stand by you as Helper. Now you will not need *then* any of the things which fortune gives and fortune often takes away again. Nor ought you to make request for anything before the proper time, but only when God reveals the right request as something which is there within you by natural instinct.

And it is through such things that God Himself is wont to show the reflexion of His likeness: He is not visible through the bodily eyes, nor through a soul which is ugly and darkened by vice. For His beauty is the beauty pure and undefiled, and His light is the light of life, shining forth in the truth, and all vice means delusion by ignorance and distortion by ugliness. These things I bid

you will, and ask of God the thing which He wills, what He Himself is, knowing this of a surety, that so long as anyone yearns after the body and the things akin to the body, so long he is ignorant of God and has darkened himself from beholding God, yea though as a god he is glorified amongst all men. A wise man, though he is known to but a few—though, if you will, he is not known to any man at all—is known to God.

Let then the spirit follow God, reflecting as a glass the likeness of God; and let the soul follow the spirit; and let the body be obedient to the soul, so far as is possible, clean as the soul is clean. For when the body is defiled by the passions of the soul, defilement comes back upon the soul from the body. But when the soul is full of the love of God, and the spirit full of the love of God, and they are both in a clean body, then let conduct and speech follow in accord, whilst you would choose rather to fling a stone at random than a word at random, and rather be defeated, speaking the truth, than conquer by falsehood. For conquest by falsehood is a moral defeat. Lying words it is which give evidence against bad men. It is impossible for the same man to be a lover of God and a lover of pleasure. For the lover of pleasure is also a lover of the body, and the lover of the body must needs also be a lover of money, and the lover of money is of necessity unrighteous, and the unrighteous man is impious towards God and towards his fathers and a transgressor of law in regard to men in general. Though he sacrifice hundreds of oxen and beautify the shrines with thousands of offerings, he is unholy and godless and in will sacrilegious. Wherefore one should avoid every lover of the body as godless and unclean.

Further, if there be one whose opinions you would not

make yours, with such a one have no fellowship either in life or in discourse about God. For to utter discourse about God to those who are corrupted by opinion is not safe: it is equally dangerous in the presence of such people to say what is true about God and to say what is false. Neither should anyone say a word about God if he himself is not clean of unholy deeds, nor should he suppose that, if he casts the divine doctrine into the ears of such men, he does not commit a pollution: one should listen to the divine doctrine and utter it, as in the presence of God. Let then the doctrine about God have God-loving works as its preparation, and let that doctrine in the presence of the multitude be covered with silence: theology is the thing most incompatible with vain opinion in the soul.

Count it better to be silent than to throw out at random a word about God. That which will make you worthy of God is to say nothing and do nothing unworthy of God, nor indeed to seek to know any such thing. The man worthy of God would be himself a god. Further, you will honour God in the best way, when you make your own mind like God. Such a making-like will be by virtue only; for virtue alone draws the soul upwards—towards that which is akin to it.

Under God, nothing else is great but virtue. God is greater than virtue, and God establishes the man whose conduct has moral beauty; but in evil conduct a man is led by an evil daemon. Therefore the wicked soul flees from God, and does not want such a thing as God's Providence to be, and altogether breaks away from the Divine Law which punishes everything vicious. But the soul of the wise man conforms itself to God, always sees God, always abides with God. And if that which

rules rejoices in that which is ruled, then God cares for and provides for the wise; and for this reason the wise man is blessed, because he is, as it were, a ward of God's.

It is not the tongue of the wise man which has worth in God's eyes, but his works. For a wise man honours God even when he is silent; but a foolish man pollutes the Divine, even when he prays and offers sacrifice. The wise man then alone is a priest, he alone loves God, he alone knows how to pray. He who trains himself in wisdom trains himself to know God, not always supplicating and sacrificing, but practising piety towards God by his works. No one indeed can become pleasing to God by the opinions of men, or the vain babblings of sophists: a man *himself* must make himself well-pleasing to God and make himself divine by the likeness of his own disposition to that Being who possesses blessedness with immortality, just as a man is made unholy and displeasing to God by himself.

No evil is done to a man by God, for the Divine can only be beneficent; a man does evil to himself, amongst other things, by his wrong opinion about God. He who neglects to tend the images of the gods is not so unholy as he who attaches to God the notions of the multitude. Do you take heed never to entertain an unworthy thought about God or about His blessedness or about His immortality. For this is the chief fruit of religion, to honour the Divine according to the way traditional in each community[1]—not as if God needed anything, but because a man feels a call to worship Him from the awful and blessed majesty which is God's. The altars of God, when tended

[1] More literally, "according to the way of the fathers" (*kata ta patria*), but the translation above is what it means. The civic or ethnic community was the *patria* of each of its members, and its institutions were those which were "ancestral" for him.

with sacrifice, bring Him no benefit, and, when neglected, bring Him no hurt.[1] Whoever pays honour to God with the idea that God is in need of it, unconsciously glorifies himself as greater than God.

The gods then do not hurt us by their anger; it is our ignorance of them which hurts us. Wrath is alien to the gods, because wrath is excited by the things which cross a person's will, and nothing can cross the will of God.[2] Do not then pollute the Divine with the false opinions of men. You will not hurt the Divine, whose blessedness is unchangeable and whose immortality suffers not the approach of any hurt, but you will blind yourself for the discernment of the greatest and highest things.

And when I say this, do not suppose that I am giving an injunction to worship God: a man would make himself ridiculous by giving such an injunction, as if it were possible to entertain any doubt in the matter! Think rather that I am showing what we must do and believe about God in order to worship Him worthily. Neither tears nor supplications turn God towards us, nor do sacrifice and oblation honour God, nor do a multitude of dedications adorn God, but the God-filled frame of mind, firm and stablished, that puts us in contact with God. It cannot but be that like goes to like. The sacrifices of the unwise are but fuel for the fire, and the dedications of the unwise do but provide temple-robbers with the means to gratify their lusts. But for you, as has been said, let the temple of God be the spirit

[1] The sense requires that we should transpose *οὐδὲν βλάπτουσιν* and *οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦσιν* in the text.

[2] The idea that God cannot be angry is a Pagan, not a Christian, idea. It is sometimes stated that the idea of the wrath of God in Christianity is a Pagan survival. This is the opposite of the truth. It is an idea which the Church asserted in face of a belief to the contrary almost universal amongst educated Pagans.

within you. That temple you must prepare and adorn to make it fit to receive God. And let the adornment be no withering garland of a day, nor such the preparation for God's entertainment, no laughter or folly, the soul tenanted by the wicked daemon.

If then you remember always that wherever your soul is, making the body active, there God stands beside you, watching you in all your thoughts and all your actions, you will reverence the Eye that nothing escapes, and you will have God to dwell with you. Even if your mouth is talking, as occasion may require, about some other matter, let your mind and thoughts be turned all the time towards God. In this way your very speech will become, as it were, inspired, illuminated by the light of the God of truth and coming forth more readily. Wherever forgetfulness of God enters in, there the evil daemon must needs come to dwell; for the soul, as you have learnt, must be tenanted either by gods or by [evil] daemons. When the gods are with it, the soul will be happy and virtuous both in words and in works; but if it has admitted that evil inmate, all its activities will be marked by wickedness.

Whenever, then, you see a man rejoicing in evil, and doing evil, know that such an one has denied God in his thoughts, and is the dwelling-place of a wicked daemon. Those who hold that God exists, and that He governs all things, have gained by their knowledge and their assured faith this benefit: they have learnt that everything is ruled by the Providence of God, and that there are divine angels and good daemons who watch the doings of men, whose vigilance no one can elude. Yes, being convinced that this is so, they take care not to make a slip in the conduct of their lives, having always before

their vision the unescapable observation of the gods; and when they have attained to a well-ordered life, they come to know the gods and are known of the gods.

Those, on the other hand, who believe neither that gods exist nor that the universe is governed by the Providence of God, suffer this as a just chastisement: they have faith neither in the witness of themselves nor in that of other people, that gods there are and the universe is not carried along by a blind irrational force. Thus they have brought themselves into unspeakable danger, setting about the business of life with irrational and unstable impulse, and doing all the things which are not lawful, trying to destroy men's conception of the gods. Such men the gods evade, because of their folly and their unbelief, but *they* cannot evade the gods, or that Justice which is the attendant of the gods, or find a hiding-place from them: because they have chosen a life miserable and vagrant, ignorant they are of the gods, but the gods know *them*, and the Justice which is with the gods knows them.

Or, supposing they think to honour the gods and are persuaded that the gods exist, but have no regard for virtue and wisdom, they have in fact denied the gods and dishonour them. For neither an irrational faith, apart from a right life, finds God, nor is it truly religious to pay honour to God, unless one has learnt how God likes to be honoured. For if God rejoiced in libations and sacrifices and could be persuaded by them, God would not be just, requiring from all men the same return, when fortune has not given all men the same means. But if this is the reverse of the truth, and purity of mind is the only thing which pleases God—a thing which anyone can have by willing it—how could the justice of that be questioned? Or if the truth be that God is pleased when service is rendered

Him in both ways, then we must honour Him with sacrifice according to our power, but with our mind even beyond our power.

To pray to God is not a bad thing, just as to be unthankful is the extreme of wickedness. No evil comes to man from any god; the man who chooses ill brings evil on himself. Prayer accompanied by vicious deeds is unclean, and therefore not acceptable to God: prayer with good works is both clean and acceptable.

In our relation to God let these four things be made strong as the foundation—*faith, truth, love, hope. Faith* we must have that there is no salvation except conversion to God, and, believing, we must use all possible diligence to know the *truth* about Him, and, when we know, we must *love* Him who is known, and, having come to love Him, we must nourish the soul throughout life by good *hopes*. These are the foundations, the A B C, and let these four things be made strong.

(3) Iamblichus

His name is a Grecised form of the Syriac Yamlik; and he was a native of Chalcis in Palestine. His active life falls under the reign of Constantine, and he died somewhere about A.D. 330. He represents the third generation of Neoplatonists, after Porphyry; whether Iamblichus was a personal disciple of Porphyry seems doubtful. Some of his writings still survive. What Iamblichus mainly did was to secure greater fullness and precision for the Neoplatonic teaching regarding the hierarchy of supernatural beings, for which purpose he drew further upon Pythagorean, Orphic and Chaldaean lore. With him there comes to be a still greater direction of interest to occult miracle-working powers, which was alien to the spirituality of Plotinus. Iamblichus was credited himself with miracles, and his slave averred that he had seen him, when in prayer, raised more than ten cubits from the ground. Eunapius says that Iamblichus, when his disciples questioned him about this, laughingly denied the story.

Comments on a Maxim ascribed to Pythagoras

PROTREPTICUS 21.

"*Thou shalt not disbelieve any wonderful thing about the Gods, or about the divine dogmas.*" This maxim sufficiently commands our reverence and indicates the transcendence of the Gods, furnishing our way and reminding us that we must not judge of the Divine Power by comparing it with ourselves: it is likely enough that certain things should be impracticable and impossible for us who are in the body and have a beginning in birth and are perishable and ephemeral, subject to all manner of diseases, to limitations in bulk, to the gravity which carries us towards the centre, to sleepiness and want and surfeit, to foolishness and weakness and obstruction of the soul, and all other such things. It is true we have, even so, many excellent endowments from nature, but we are nevertheless in every respect inferior to the Gods: we have neither the same power which they have, nor a virtue comparable to theirs. This maxim then specially instils into us knowledge of the Gods, knowledge that they can do everything. For this reason it admonishes us not to disbelieve anything about the Gods. And it adds "or about the divine dogmas"—that is, the doctrines included in the Pythagorean philosophy. For such dogmas, securely established by mathematics and by scientific contemplation, are alone true and infallible, fortified impregnably by all manner of demonstration and compulsive reasoning. Maxims like this have the power to incite us to an understanding of the Gods; for they admonish us to acquire such an understanding as will enable us not to disbelieve anything about the Gods or the divine dogmas. To go through a course of

mathematical study can teach us the same lesson; for mathematics alone open the eyes and give light about all the things which really *are*, to those who are going to study them and get the vision of them. Through mathematics the one all-important thing is imparted to us—not to be disbelieving about either the nature or the being or the power of the Gods, or indeed about the Pythagorean dogmas, which seem mere miracle-mongering to those outside the circle, those who have not been initiated into mathematics. So the maxim "Thou shalt not disbelieve" is equivalent to saying, "Follow after and acquire those things in virtue of which thou wilt not disbelieve" — that is, mathematics and scientific demonstration.

From "The Secret Doctrines"

The title of this book in Latin is *De Mysteriis*, but, as a matter of fact, it is not concerned with mystery-religions. Hopfner points out that the title should be understood as meaning "About the Secret Doctrines." The book is attributed in old MSS. to Iamblichus, and modern research seems to have made it probable that Iamblichus was really the author of it. But it pretends to be the work of an Egyptian priest Abammon, an answer to a letter which Porphyry had written to another Egyptian priest, Anebo, putting before him a series of difficulties regarding the beliefs and practices of Pagan religion. Porphyry's letter was probably really written to an Egyptian priest. Now, years after apparently, Iamblichus wished to refute Porphyry's objections and chose to do so, not in his own name, but behind the mask of an imaginary Egyptian priest Abammon. The claim of the book to give sacred Egyptian lore is pure make-believe; its doctrines are simply a variety of Greek Neoplatonism. No doubt, in the first centuries of the Christian era Egyptian priests who acquired Greek education may have tried to explain Egyptian religion as an allegory of Greek philosophical theories, just as Philo tried to explain the Jewish scriptures. In fact we know of one Egyptian priest, Chaeremon, who was also a Stoic philosopher, one of Nero's teachers, and apparently wrote in Greek to explain his ancestral religion in this way. It is therefore quite possible that Iamblichus may have known Egyptian priests who held views

like those put forward in the *De Mysteriis*, but the views themselves were Greek, not Egyptian. There is thus, no doubt, a certain savour of imposture about the book, and where it professes to give occult experiences (the way you may tell whether a supernatural apparition is that of a God, a Daemon or a Hero) it strikes one as having no real experience to go upon, but as giving simply what Iamblichus thought, according to a rather wooden scheme, it would be appropriate for an Egyptian priest to say. Nevertheless the book is of great interest and importance, as, so far as we know, the most elaborate attempt yet made to frame the crude and childish material of Greek Paganism into a precise system of rational theology (*epistemonikē theologia*, "scientific theology"). That had to be done if it was to hold its own against Christianity. The book has been curiously neglected; there is no modern edition of the text since Parthey's (1857). A translation into German with competent introduction and notes by Dr. Theodor Hopfner (*"Ueber die Geheimlehren," von Iamblichus*) appeared in 1922.

Divine Inspiration

De Mysteriis iii. 4 ff.

You say: "Many people get a hold upon the future through 'enthusiasm,' divine possession, in a waking condition, so that their activity is accompanied by consciousness, and yet without consciousness of what they themselves are doing, or at any rate without their ordinary consciousness." I want to put before you, in regard to this, the signs of true possession by the Gods. People in this state have either submitted their whole physical life, as a vehicle or an instrument, to the Gods who inspire them, or they substitute a Divine life for their human life, or they act in virtue of their own proper life, but addressed to the God. They do not act "consciously," nor are they "awake" as people are who have their senses in a waking condition, nor do they themselves "get a hold upon the future," nor are they moved like those whose activities follow volitions, nor have they "consciousness

of what they themselves are doing," not only not their "ordinary consciousness," but no consciousness at all, nor do they direct their own understanding to themselves, nor is any of the knowledge they put forth their own.

And this is the greatest sign of all: many to whom fire is applied are not burnt, the fire having no power upon them on account of the Divine inbreathing; many others are burnt indeed, but have no feeling of it, because at that moment they are not living the life of the animal. Some thrust skewers through their flesh and feel nothing; others swing axes against their backs, others cut their arms with knives, and have no consciousness of it. Their activities are not human at all, for to a man in a condition of divine possession impassable places become passable; they are impelled into fire and walk through fire and traverse rivers, like the priestess in Castabala.[1] This proves that people in "enthusiasm" are not conscious of what they are doing; their life at the time is not an animal life of sense-perception or a human life of volitional impulse; all that has given place to a diviner life, from which they draw inspiration and by which they are absolutely held fast. . . .

It is not enough, however, to learn what I have so far told you; nor could anyone become perfect in divine knowledge who knew no more than this. You must also know what "enthusiasm" is, and how it comes about. Some have supposed it to be a rapture of the mind with Daemonic inspiration. But that is false. The human mind is not carried along at all, if it is true possession, nor does the inspiration come from Daemons, but from Gods. Nor can it be simply described as "ecstasy"—a

[1] In the temple of Artemis at Castabala, in Cilicia, the Priestess had to walk with bare feet over glowing embers (Strabo, xii. 811).

going out from self: it is rather a drawing upward to That-which-is-above-us, a going to another sphere; frenzy, "ecstasy," by itself, may denote a reversal to what is lower. He who uses these terms does indeed describe some of the accidental features of "enthusiasm," but he fails to indicate the most important thing. This is, that people in such a condition are possessed altogether by the Divine Power; "ecstasy," going out from self, follows as a consequence. It is wrong to conceive of "enthusiasm" as an operation of the soul, or of any faculty in the soul, mind or energies, whether with a weakening of the body or without such weakening, nor should "enthusiasm" be supposed to come about in that way. For divine possession is not a human work at all, nor does it rest upon the parts and energies of man. Those parts and energies are there indeed as a substratum, and the God uses them as instruments; but the whole work of divination he accomplishes through his own agency; acting freely in separation from everything else, without any movement of the human soul or human body, he is active by himself. Whence the soothsaying, which is directed in the way I describe, is infallible. But when the soul is in a state of unrest beforehand, or begins to move during the process, or becomes involved in the movements of the body, and so disturbs the divine harmony, the deliverances become turbid and false, and the "enthusiasm" is no longer of the true kind, not genuinely divine.

Sacrifice

De Mysteriis v. 3, 4, 9.

Your next difficulty concerns a problem which exercises practically all men, whether they have devoted

time to learning, or whether they are unversed in intellectual inquiries: I mean the problem of sacrifices. What is their use or effect in the universe and with the Gods? On what principle are they performed appropriately to the Beings honoured and profitably to those who offer the gifts? And to this problem is attached what seems a particular contradiction: the priests, you say, are bound to abstain from flesh food in order that the Gods may not be defiled by the fumes arising from animal bodies, whereas the Gods themselves are attracted in an especial degree by such fumes. . . .

To us men, indeed, gratification of appetite on bodies which have been temporarily associated with a soul communicates grossness and impurity, it generates sensuous pleasure and creates other maladies in the soul; but in the case of the Gods, the kosmic Powers of the Universe, the vapour which arises from such things in holy ritual acts has no such effect. Such vapour does not surround the Divine, but is surrounded by it. It is itself adjusted to the universe, and does not adjust the universe, or the Gods, to itself. It is conformed to the Higher Powers, the Universal Causes; it does not get possession of them or conform them to itself.

What confounds you as a contradiction in regard to the abstinence from flesh food has no difficulty, if you look at the matter in the right way. It is not "in order that the Gods may not be defiled by fumes arising from animal bodies," that the ministrants abstain from flesh food. What vapour indeed from bodies could come near Beings who repel all matter, without contact, from their sphere of power, before any material thing at all has a chance of touching them? Nor is it only that their power consumes and annihilates all bodies without their

coming near the bodies, but that the *body* of the heavens suffers no admixture with material elements; neither would it admit into itself anything extraneous, nor impart any portion of itself to what is alien. How then could fumes belonging to the earthly sphere, which before ever they have mounted to a height of five stadia [about 800 yards] from the earth flow back again to the earth, come near the heavens or feed their rotating immaterial body or affect them at all, by pollution or in any other way? . . .

The rationale of sacrifice is best found in love and affinity, the relation which binds creators to the things created, begetters to the begotten. Whenever therefore, under the primacy of the Universal Cause, we take some animal or some plant growing upon the earth, which preserves pure and undefiled the will of Him who made it, then by its means we set in motion the creative agency which rests, without contamination, upon it, and do so in the way corresponding to its nature. And since there are many such creative agents, some closely connected [with the material world], like the Daemons, others placed above them, like the Gods, and, yet higher still, the One Supreme Originating Cause, this whole series of agencies is set in motion by the perfect sacrifice: according to the rank allotted to each in the hierarchy, it establishes affinity with the sacrifice in the way of kinship. But if any sacrifice is imperfect, it can reach only a certain way, and beyond that is unable to go.

De Mysteriis v. 23.

It may be as well, in order that you may have an accurate understanding of these matters, to add the following considerations. The superabundant power of

the Highest Beings transcends by its very nature all the rest of the universe in this respect also, that it is present to everything without variation, without let or hindrance. Accordingly the Highest and First shines forth in the lowest and last; the immaterial is present in an immaterial mode to the material. Let no one then be astonished, if we speak of particular kinds of matter as "clean" and "divine." Such matter, itself a creature of the Father and Creator of all that is, possesses by its perfection a peculiar fitness to receive the Gods. Again, no impediment prevents the Higher Powers from illuminating the things below them; nothing therefore cuts off matter from participation in what is nobler, so that all matter which is perfect and clean and of good aspect is not unadapted to receive the Gods. Since it was never meant that things on earth should be entirely without share in the Divine fellowship, the earth too received from that fellowship a certain portion of the Divine, enough to make room for the Gods.

These things were perceived by the theurgic art, and thus, according to the general principle of affinity, it searched out what things served as suitable receptacles for what Gods, and now often combining particular stones, plants, animals, spices and other such holy, perfect and godlike things, it fabricates from all of them a receptacle complete and pure for some Divine Being.

Prayer

De Mysteriis v. 26.

Since one element in sacrifices, and by no means the least important, is Prayer, since Prayer gives them their full perfection, and by its means the whole operation is made powerful and complete, since it sets the crown

upon religion as a whole and since through it the ritual bond of fellowship with the Gods becomes indissoluble, it may be as well to say a few words about it. The subject in itself is worth study and without it our theological knowledge would have a gap. I say then that the first kind of Prayer is that which *brings together*, which opens the way for contact with the Divine, recognition of the Divine; the second kind is that which *corroborates* harmonious communion, that which calls forth the gifts sent down from the Gods, gifts which do their whole work before we speak, before we even conceive the thought of them. The third and last kind sets the seal upon the unutterable union; it founds its whole validity on the Gods, and causes our soul to have its resting-place in the Gods completely.

In these three modes, which cover the whole field of divinity, Prayer, whilst it brings about our friendship with the Gods, also secures us the blessings which come to us, through sacred acts, from the Gods, and those of three kinds. The first tends to illumination, the second to co-operation in works, the third to a perfect filling with the Fire. Sometimes Sacrifice precedes Prayer; sometimes Prayer comes in the middle of the ritual; sometimes it forms the conclusion of Sacrifice.

No ritual act takes place without petitionary prayer. To spend a long time in prayer nourishes our spiritual understanding, makes a far wider room in our soul for the reception of the Gods, opens the things of the Gods to men, gives us familiarity with the flashings of the Light, little by little perfects us internally for the Divine contact, till it leads us upward to the highest height, gently uproots the habits of our own minds and plants instead those of the Gods, awakens trust and communion and indissoluble

friendship, increases the Divine Love, kindles what is Divine in the Soul, purges away from the Soul everything of contrary quality, eliminates so much of the shiny aether-stuff round about the Soul as disposes us to physical reproduction, perfects good hope and faith in the Light: in sum, Prayer makes those who employ it, if one may use the word, familiars of the Gods.

Rationale of Threats uttered in Invocation of Higher Powers

De Mysteriis vi. 5, 6.

Come, then, and let us speak of another class of difficulties which have an occult explanation. I refer to the practices which include, as you yourself point out, threatenings of violence, but exhibit many varieties as the threatenings used are of many kinds. For the adept may threaten to "shatter the firmament," or to "divulge the secrets of Isis," or to "reveal the Mystery hidden in the Abyss," or to "bring the Boat (of the Sun) to a standstill," or to "scatter the members of Osiris for Typhon," and so on. All words of such a kind are not addressed by men, as you suppose, to the Sun or to the Moon or to any other of the Heavenly Powers—for your expressions of indignation are inadequate to the horrors which would follow from such a supposition—but are addressed, as I said earlier in my epistle, to a certain class of Powers attached to particular portions of the kosmos, a class destitute of judgment or reason. They receive indeed from a higher Power reasonable direction, which they follow, but they have no understanding of their own and are incapable of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, between the possible and

the impossible. When threatenings in promiscuous volume are flung against these Powers, they are confounded and frightened, being disposed by their nature, I take it, both themselves to be led by appearances and to move the souls of others by passionate and unstable imagination.

Or another explanation may be offered for these practices. The adept, by the virtue of occult formulas, issues his order to the kosmic Powers, no longer as a simple man or the possessor of a human soul, but as one already established in the rank of the Gods; and so he uses threatenings quite out of correspondence with his own nature. He does not mean that he will actually do all the things which he strongly declares, but by such a use of words he manifests how great and terrible a power he has in virtue of his union with the Gods—a union secured him by his knowledge of the occult formulas.

Or, again, one may say this: The Daemons with special provinces in the kosmos, guardians of particular portions of the universe, have so anxious a care and solicitude for the provinces severally allotted to them, that they cannot bear to hear even a word portending harm to them, their office being to preserve the eternal continuance of things in the kosmos without change. But the changelessness of the charge they have received depends on the order of the Gods continuing immutable and steadfast. Merely to hear, therefore, the utterance of threats against that by which they have their own being is intolerable to the Daemons of the air and the region round the earth.

Yet another possible explanation: The Daemons are responsible for guarding the occult mysteries—a charge all the more important in that by these mysteries chiefly the whole order of the kosmos is held together. The parts

of the universe remain in their proper station only so long as the beneficent power of Osiris remains pure and undefiled, free from admixture with the naughtiness and the disorder opposed to it. The life of the universe remains clean and uncorrupted, because the hidden beauties of Isis which generate the vital formulas (*logoi*) do not descend into sensible visible Body. The universe remains immutable and eternally reproductive, because the course of the Sun never comes to a standstill. The universe remains perfect and entire, because the secret objects in Abydos are never revealed. The things then upon which the preservation of the universe depends (I mean the secret mysteries being perpetually kept hidden and the unutterable nature of the Gods being never associated with the opposite destiny)—merely to hear these things spoken of as suffering change or having their sanctity violated is intolerable to the Daemons of the earthly sphere, and for this reason such a form of words exercises a kind of power upon them. But the Gods no one ever threatens, and there is no such form of prayer in regard to them. Wherefore amongst the Chaldaeans, with whom discourse to the Gods, and the Gods alone, is practised, threatening is never uttered. The Egyptians, on the other hand, who mingle with the system of divine symbols discourse addressed to the Daemons, do occasionally employ threats.

(4) Christian Criticism of Philosophic Theology

Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* III. 6. 2–6.

Let us grant that these praters about the things in the sky speak the truth, and hit the mark when they explain the myths as allegories of nature: let the sun be, as they

wish, now Apollo, now Horus, now Osiris, and so forth; let the moon be Isis or Artemis, or any other of the figures in the catalogue. . . . For this reason, they say, we ought to worship the sun and the moon and the other parts of the world as gods. . . . How great and wonderful is the gospel of our Saviour Jesus, the Christ of God, which teaches every race of men to serve with fitting thoughts the God and Master of the sun and moon, the Maker of the whole universe! To praise, not the material elements, but the Nourisher of life itself, the Dispenser of all good things, not to stand in awe of the visible parts of the kosmos or of anything apprehended by fleshly sensation, since all such things are of perishable nature, but to render worship and wonder only to Him who is in all these things, invisible, and to the Mind, creator alike of the world as a whole and of each particular thing, and to regard as God that one Divine Power alone which pervades and orders the universe, a Power of nature incorporeal and intelligential, or rather, not to be described by words nor apprehended in thought, yet discernible after a manner through all the things which are, the things through which it works, pervading all things not as a material substance, reacting to all things without bodily implication, not things in heaven only, but things on the earth as well, the general elements and the elements of each particular thing, exhibiting the everlasting mighty operation of deity, controlling everything imperceptibly, controlling us too, even though we have no sense of it, governing the whole kosmos according to a scheme of inexpressible wisdom.

Praeparatio Evangelica III. 10. 3–10.

I say that it is the extreme of impiety to call the parts

of the kosmos parts of God, and even worse to identify the kosmos with God, and, in accordance with this, to say that the Ruling Mind of the kosmos [1] is the Maker of all things. To speak of Him as the Fashioner of the kosmos or the Saviour of the kosmos accords with true religion, but to describe Him as the Mind of the kosmos in the sense in which we speak of the soul of an animal, something one with the organism throughout and clothed with it, that goes beyond what piety allows. That He is present to the whole and that He exercises providence for the kosmos we are taught indeed by our own sacred oracles, which speak worthily of God when they say, "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord," [2] and again, "He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath," [3] and again, "For in him we live and move and have our being" [4]—not, that is to say, in what is a portion of the world, nor in what is the Soul or Mind of the world. . . . What kind of God would it be of whom earth and the mountains on earth were portions, masses of brute matter? And how is it rational to proclaim God the brother and kinsman of fire and earth and air and water, offshoots of brute and perishable stuff? Further, if the mind of Zeus be nothing but the aether, as they indicate, and if aether is simply the highest of the air, fiery, and deriving its name from *aithesthai*, "to burn," and if both air and aether are corporeal substances, what, pray, has become of the *mind* of Zeus?

Praeparatio Evangelica III. 13. 22–24.

They may say: "It is not the visible bodies of the

[1] The Ruling Principle (*Hēgemonikon*) in each individual, according to the Stoic phraseology, was the highest part of the Soul: the Stoics spoke of God as the *Hēgemonikon* of the kosmos.
[2] Jeremiah xxiii. 24. [3] Joshua ii. 11. [4] Acts xvii. 28.

sun and moon and stars, nor those portions of the kosmos which can be perceived by sense that we worship as divine: what we worship is the invisible Powers of Him who is over all within these things: God is one, but He fills the universe with all kinds of different Powers, pervades everything and controls everything, being in all things after an incorporeal and imperceptible sort, pervading them, as we said, and He it is whom we worship through the things which are manifest, as it is reasonable to do." If this is so, why do they not discard all the foul and unseemly mythical stories about the gods, as abominable and profane? Why do they not make away with all the books concerning these things, as containing a mass of impieties and obscenities, and direct their praise to the one and only invisible God, frankly and cleanly and without any foul paraphernalia? . . .

What the wise praters about things in the sky should surely do is to free themselves from all these things, as the shackles of error, and impart to all men without grudging their studies of nature, proclaiming to all men with the plainest simplicity that they should not stand in awe of the things which do appear, but only of their invisible Maker, and that they should reverence His unseen incorporeal Powers with a worship which is itself unseen and incorporeal — not kindling fire nor sacrificing a ram or a bull, not even thinking that they can honour the Divine Being by garlands and images and the bricks and stones of temples, but by thoughts made clean and by right and true beliefs, with a soul free from passion, being transformed, so far as is possible, into His likeness by virtuous living.

XVIII. THE LAST WORD

Alleged by a writer of the eleventh century, George Cedrenus, to have been an oracle delivered at Delphi to the emissaries of the Emperor Julian (A.D. 331–363). See Swinburne's poem *The Last Oracle*.

Tell ye the King: It is fallen, the dwelling of wondrous
adornment;
Gone are the booths of Apollo, the green oracular laurel;
Dumb the streams; dry, dry is the garrulous water for ever.

THE END

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